New war looms as troops land in Lanao Sur

STORY ON PAGE A2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2001 ★★ 28 PAGES 2 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 32 ₱15

Estrada verdict out by Feb. 12

By Juliet L. Javellana

THE SENATE impeachment court will hand down by Feb. 12 its verdict on the four charges against President Estrada.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said this was the agreement reached yesterday by House prosecutors, defense lawyers and sena-

ESTRADA/ A12

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Oil firms cut prices
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- Fr. Benjie buried
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- Lacson, others charged
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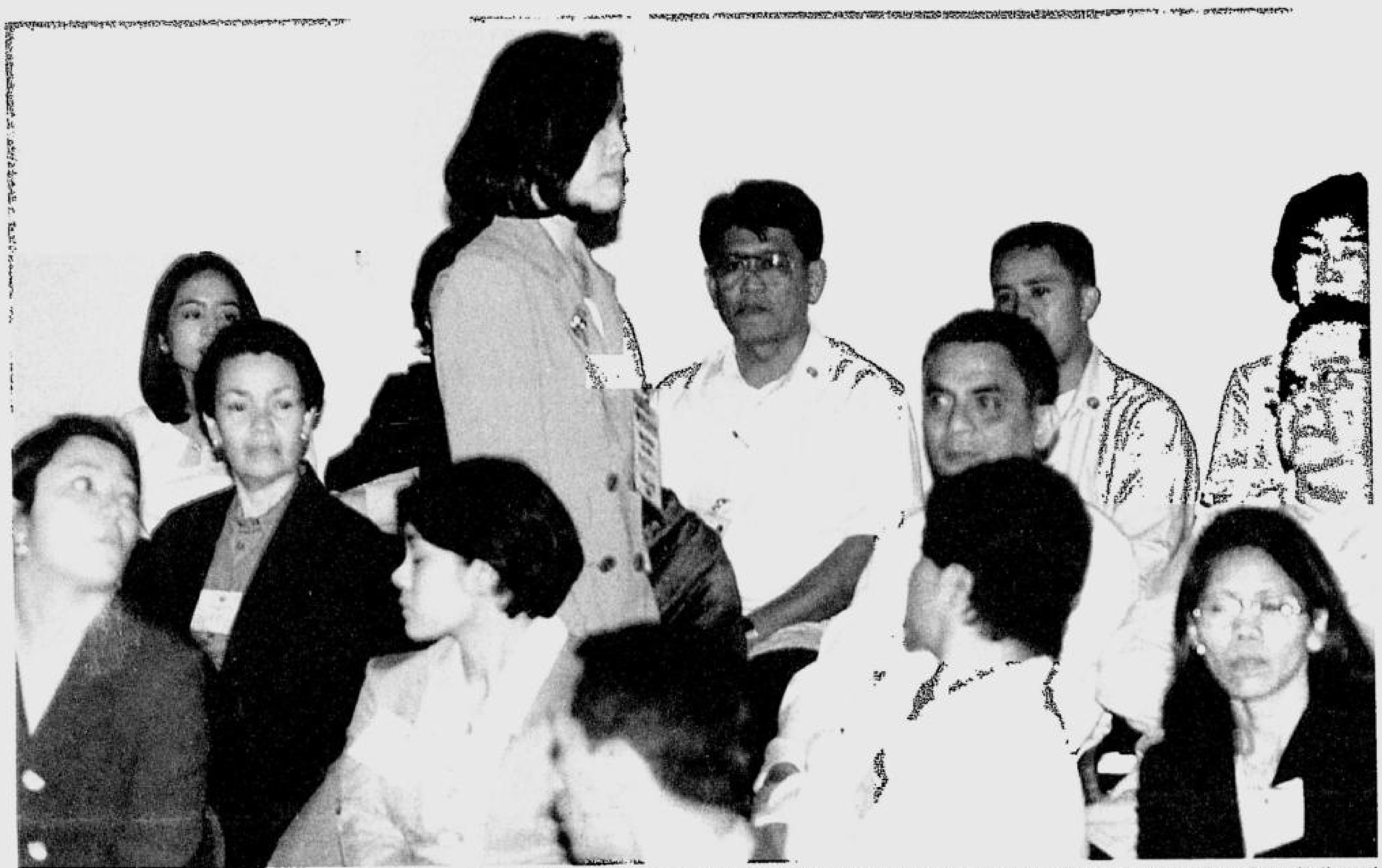
'Atong sis tried cover-up'



LOOKING for someone not meant to be found is the impossible task of Landbank cashier, Maria Caridad Rodenas, who goes up and down the spectators' gallery where sits the real Delia Rajas (lower corner, extreme right).

JESS YUSON

Cook spices up impeachment proceedings

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

ANOTHER attempt at a cover-up was revealed yesterday at the impeachment trial of President Estrada.

Prosecution witness Maria Caridad Rodenas, a cashier of Land Bank of the Philippines, told the court she received calls from a sister of Charlie "Atong" Ang asking her to erase bank records pertaining to the accounts opened in August 1998 by three people who later withdrew P130 million.

The three were Delia Rajas, Alma Alfaro and Eleuterio Tan. The real Rajas turned out to be a cook, a revelation that the court sent the court sizzling.

Rodenas said that Ang's sister called her four times last October requesting that all records of Power Express filed with Landbank Shaw Boulevard branch be destroyed.

Prosecution lawyers identified Power Express as a company owned by Ang, a close friend of the President.

Rodenas said a caller who identified herself as Yolanda Uy initially asked that she meet with her outside the bank, a request that the cashier refused.

The cashier said Uy eventually asked that bank records pertaining to Power Express' account with the bank be destroyed.

Rodenas said she refused the request since it was against the bank's policy to do so.

"I told her I could not do that because these are original (documents of) transactions," made with the bank, Rodenas testified on the 17th day of the landmark Senate trial.

SAGISAG NG PANGULO NG PILIPINAS
DAY 17

The cashier said Uy at one point asked her whether she was aware of the "jueteng" scandal exposed by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Singson earlier told the court he had helped the President siphon off P130 million from the excise taxes on tobacco intended for tobacco farmers in his province.

ATONG/ A11

Defense lawyer faces sanction for 'dirty trick'

By Juliet L. Javellana
And Cathy Yamsuan

EVEN Senator-Judge Miriam Defensor-Santiago was outraged when a defense lawyer of President Estrada appeared to have pulled a "dirty trick" on a prosecution witness during the impeachment hearing yesterday.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the impeachment court's presiding officer, said Sigfried Fortun should be given time to answer why he should not be cited for contempt.

Fortun had claimed that Delia Rajas who withdrew P40 million from the Shaw Boulevard branch of Land Bank of the Philippines, was present in the Senate gallery and asked the witness, cashier Maria Caridad Rodenas, to point

DEFENSE/ A11

The defense bombshell that never was

By Raul J. Palabrica

ANALYSIS

THE BOMBSHELL the defense planned to unload in the course of its cross-examination of Caridad Rodenas, assistant cashier of the Shaw Boulevard branch of Landbank, not only proved to be a dud, it misfired and caused serious damage to the reputation of the lawyer concerned.

It was clear from the initial questions posed by lawyer Sigfried Fortun to Rodenas that he wanted to test the accuracy of her recollection of the face and physical description of the people who withdrew the money that came from the bank's Vigan branch, namely, Delia Rajas, Alma Alfaro and Victor Tan Uy.

Thus, when Fortun said Rajas was in the audience during the hearing and asked Rodenas to identify her from the crowd, the question was aimed at disproving Rodenas' claim that she can identify any of

THE DEFENSE/ A12

Maceda: Laarni, Guia good in business

By Armand N. Nocum
and TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG yesterday defended the reported wealth of Laarni Enriquez and Guia Gomez, two of President Estrada's mistresses, while the Senate court admitted as evidence in the impeachment trial a check for P8 million deposited in First Lady Luisa "Loi" Ejercito's bank account.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Maceda said it was "natural" for Enriquez and Gomez to have more money than the First Lady because the two former starlets are both successful businesswomen.

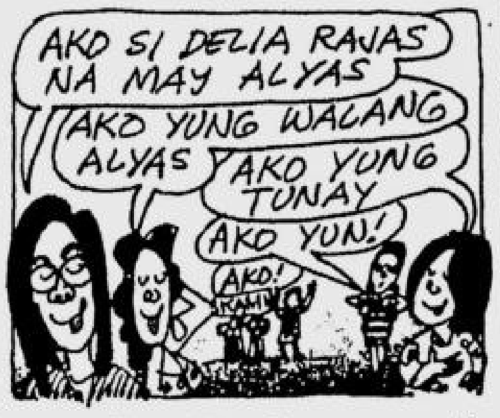
In a radio interview, Maceda said there could be some truth to the revelation of House Prosecutor Rep. Joker Arroyo that Enriquez and Gomez are richer than Dr. Ejercito because of the latter's "charity work."

Arroyo said Saturday that Enriquez and Gomez had much bigger bank accounts than the President's wife, the alleged recipient of two checks totaling P8.4 million made out to "cash" by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Arroyo had declined to name the banks and the amounts involved.

"We all know that Guia and Laarni are businesspersons. It is natural" for them to

MACEDA/ A11



Delia Rajas used another name to enter Senate

By Martin P. Marfil
and Juliet L. Javellana

THE WOMAN claiming to be the real Delia Rajas used another name to enter the Senate impeachment court yesterday.

Based on the ticket issued to Rajas, someone signed for her in the Senate logbook of visitors using the name Belen Piamonte/Biamonte with address at Cityland 11, Tower I, Makati City.

The revelation came after journalists

DELIA/ A11

Angara admits gambling has become a big problem

'You no longer know what is illegal…'

By Armand N. Nocum.
and Donna S. Cueto

THE ISSUE of gambling will be one of Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara's top priorities, second only to setting up a "code of public conduct" for the Estrada administration.

Speaking over radio station dzMM yesterday, the newly appointed "Little President" said the gambling problem appeared to have gone out of hand.

"Right now, you no longer know what is illegal and allowed in gambling," he said of the issue that triggered the "Juetengate" scandal, which, in turn, led to President Estrada's impeachment.

In another radio interview, Angara said there would be no more fiefdoms and intramurals in Malacañang.

"The problem before was the intramurals," he said over dzRH. "During the time of (President Corazon Aquino), there were no intramurals because the PMS (Presi-

ANGARA/ A12

She's not afraid of 'snake pit'

By Donna S. Cueto

THIS young woman is not afraid of the vaunted "snake pit" that is Malacañang.

"When I accepted this position, I did it with eyes very wide open," said Ma. Celia "Macel" Fernandez, newly appointed chief of the Presidential Management Staff (PMS).

At 29, Fernandez is the youngest member of the Estrada Cabinet. She was bar topnotcher in 1997, and is known to be a protégé of Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara.

Asked if she was afraid of being bitten by the supposed snakes in Malacañang, she said: "I think people who want to do good, and who want to work hard, shouldn't be afraid of rumors like that."

Fernandez is likewise unfazed by those who would question why one so young would be appointed to head one of the most controversial posts at the Palace.

"All that just makes me a young PMS head, that's all," she said.

SHE'S/ A12

DENNIS SABANGAN

LOOK, ma, no snake bites for Ma. Celia Fernandez who at 29 is the youngest member of the President's Cabinet.

Second FRONT PAGE

HUWAG NAMAN... KAWAWA NAMAN ANG MINDANAO!

Lacson, other police officers charged

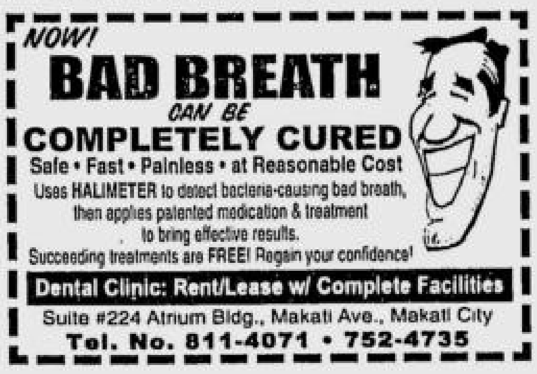
MARY Ong, the Hong Kong anti-narcotics agent who has accused police chief Panfilo Lacson of involvement in kidnapping and drug trafficking, has formally charged Lacson, six ranking police officials, four junior officers, and two civilian agents before the Ombudsman with 10 criminal offenses.

Ong, a former informant of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force code-named "Rosebud" or "Mata Hari," told reporters yesterday that she was charging Lacson and the other officials in connection with illegal operations conducted by the PAOCTF, its forerunner, the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission, and the Narcotics Command, now Anti-Narcotics Group.

Accompanied by her counsel, lawyer Gregorio Viterbo, the 54-year-old Ong went to the Office of the Ombudsman at about 4 p.m. yesterday to file the charges, which include drug trafficking, murder, kidnapping, serious illegal detention and wiretapping.

Ong had earlier implicated Lacson and the others with involvement in the illegal drugs business, kidnapping, torture and killing of drug lords.

Aside from Lacson, Ong charged P/Director Reynaldo M. Acop, P/Sr. Supt. Michael Ray Aquino, P/Sr. Supt. John P. Campos, P/Chief Supt. Francisco Zubia, P/Supt. Francisco Villaroman, P/Insp. Cesar Aquino and four junior officers—P/Sr. Insp. Avelino Abogado, P/Sr. Insp. Julius Mana, SPO1 Danilo Castro and SPO1 Cris Mathay. *Michael Lim Ubac*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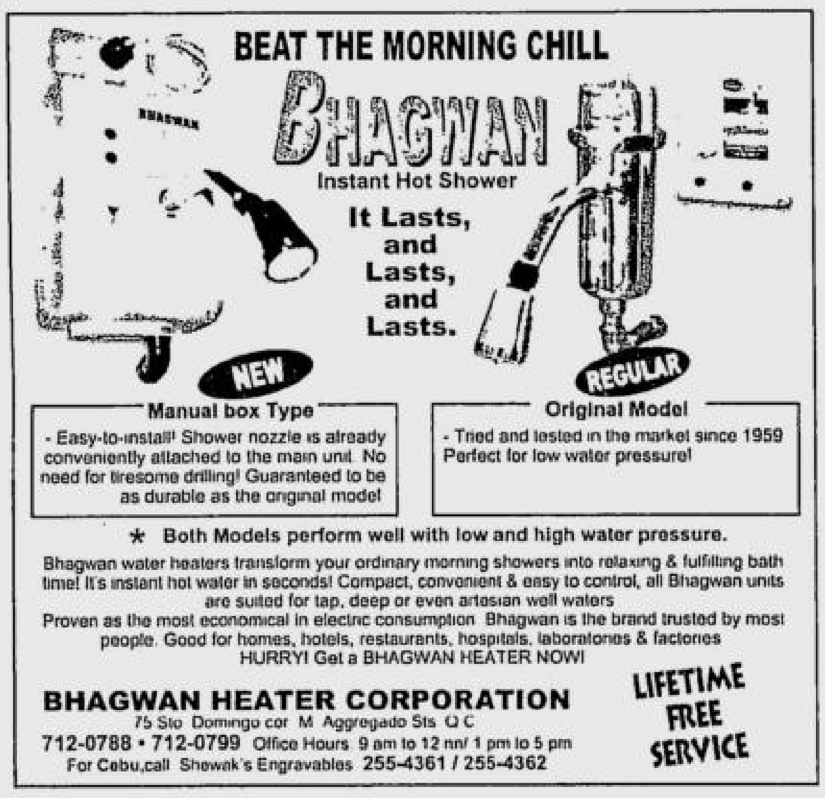
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TROUBLE IN MINDANAO

New war looms as troops land

COTABATO CITY—More troops have landed in Malabang, Lanao del Sur, as part of alleged military preparations for renewed offensives against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Maj. Johnny Macanas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro City, confirmed the troop movements in the Lanao provinces but said these were "routinary measures to change boundaries of Army units."

A Marine battalion landed in Malabang on Friday.

Macanas also told Bombo Radio dxIF that the "sightings or movements" of MILF forces were noted, but these involved small groups.

On Saturday, President Estrada ordered the suspension of peace negotiations with the MILF and the continuation of offensives against the rebels.

Fears of a new round of fighting in Mindanao were expressed yesterday by church and Moro leaders, businessmen, relief workers and other peace advocates.

"Mindanao should not be sacrificed again to save President Estrada," they said.

Earlier, police authorities blamed the MILF for the spate bombings in Metro Manila on Dec. 30 that resulted in the death of at least 22 persons.

MILF vice chair for military affairs Al Haj Murad denied the accusations as he reiterated his group's strategy of "semi-conventional warfare, not urban terrorism."

Rey Magno Teves, a convenor of the Mindanao Peace Advocates Conference, said the government's war declaration could be related to the campaign for the ouster of the President on charges of corruption and other wrongdoings.

When the President launched an "all-out war" against the MILF last year, Teves noted that mass actions calling for his resignation were already mounting.

"Mindanao is again being sacrificed (to save the President). That is the worst part of these developments," Teves said.

The Mindanao Business Council also expressed dismay over the resumption of attacks against the MILF.

MBC chair Joji Ilagan Bian said hostilities last year scared away investors and slowed down tourism and other business activities in areas not directly affected by the war.

"We have a crisis in leadership, we have not recovered yet from the effects of the war, why is the government taking another drastic action by launching a war?" she asked.

Davao Oriental Gov. Rosalind Lopez said the people of Mindanao were being used again as "scapegoats to take the heat off Erap."

"But that will not take the heat off him," said Lopez, a partymate of Mr. Estrada.

Cotabato City Bishop Orlando Quevedo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, expressed suspicion that the President's order was meant to distract government attention on the ongoing impeachment trial.

Quevedo warned that another war would mean more displacement and hardships, especially to people who were displaced at the height of the war last year.

"It's a big mistake," Prof. Moner Bajunaid, chair of the MILF committee on peace process, said of the renewed military offensive. He said it was "a tactic to divert the attention of the country from the impeachment proceedings."

Murad, MILF chair Salamat Hashim and other key officials are facing charges of multiple and frustrated murder for the Dec. 30 bombings in Metro Manila.

Macanas, spokesperson of the Army's 4th ID in Cagayan de Oro, showed to the INQUIRER a photocopy of a purported MILF document that was recovered in the rebels' Camp Bushra on Nov. 25. Bushra fell into government hands on May 28.

The document was said to be "a feasibility project for bombing and economic sabotage."

In Cotabato City, fighting erupted Sunday night in Carmen, North Cotabato, when Moro rebels attacked a detachment of the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion.

No one was killed or wounded in the hour-long clash.

In Barira, Maguindanao, hundreds of former evacuees have moved out again following an encounter between MILF guerrillas and Marines on Jan. 3.

The military claimed six rebel fatalities, including MILF Commander Sulayman. *Allan A. Nawal, Nico A. Alconaba, Jowel F. Canuday, Froilan Gallardo, Ellen P. Red, Edwin O. Fernandez, Ferdinand O. Zuasola and Carolyn O. Arguillas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Raps filed vs MILF chiefs for bombings

MURDER charges were filed Monday against four leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) accused of masterminding the bomb attacks in Metro Manila last Dec. 30.

The Department of Justice filed in absentia multiple murder charges against MILF chairman Salamat Hashim, vice chairmen Mohammad Murad, Ghadzali Jaafar and Aleem Aziz Mimbantas and three other members of the rebel group.

Senior state prosecutor Romeo Danosos filed the charges before a Manila regional trial court. The offense carries the death penalty.

Twenty-two people were killed and almost 100 were injured in five bomb blasts around Metro Manila that Saturday.

"After assessing the evidence on hand, we find probable cause to warrant the indictment of the respondents for murder," a prosecution statement said.

National police chief Director General Panfilo Lacson said Monday the charges against the MILF leaders were backed by "strong material and testimonial evidence."

He said the attacks were part of an MILF "feasibility project" aimed at "high profile targets" in the capital to cause "economic sabotage."

He said details of the project were found in a four-page document recovered by Army rangers from an MILF camp in Mindanao in November last year.

Earlier Monday, Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado said there would be no letup in the military offensive against the MILF, whose leaders "should pay" for the bombings which killed civilians.

Fighting between government forces and the MILF was reported to have intensified after the police on Friday recommended the filing of the charges against the rebel group's leaders.

"There have been encounters. These have been happening for some time," Mercado said.

He said the military offensive against the MILF "has been a continuing effort" to prevent the group from re-establishing bases and consolidating power.

MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu on Sunday denied the group was behind the Manila attacks, saying its offensives target military personnel in the south.

Ismael Abbas, an MILF member listed on the charge sheet, was among dozens of suspects arrested since the bombings, officials said.

According to Lacson, Abbas was positively identified by witnesses as among those who alighted from a red car rigged with explosives just before it blew up near a cargo handling facility at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Apart from the cargo facility, bombs also exploded in a light rail car, a bus, a park near the US Embassy and outside a Makati hotel. *AFP*

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House set to OK budget

THE HOUSE of Representatives was expected to ratify in special session last night the bicameral conference committee report on the bill seeking to lift the 12-year-old ban on election campaign ads in the tri-media.

The House approval is the final legislative hurdle the bill must clear to be finally transmitted to Malacañang for the President's signature. The Senate approved the report last year.

NEWSBRIEFS

RP sailors cleared

JAMAICAN authorities have released two Filipino sailors who had been jailed for almost a month for allegedly killing a stowaway and throwing his body overboard.

Alexander Callado and Rodelio Espino, crewmembers of the cargo vessel MV Winterstar, were arrested and jailed on Dec. 15 by the police shortly after their ship docked in Jamaica.

A court judge, however, cleared the two of murder charges for "lack of sufficient evidence," according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Lunar eclipse tomorrow

THE FIRST lunar eclipse in the new millennium, the first of three such eclipses this year, will be visible in the country early tomorrow morning, according to the Philippine Astronomical Society. The total eclipse of the moon will last for 62 minutes, 12 hours—from 3:49 a.m. to 4:51 a.m.

A lunar eclipse occurs when the earth blocks the sun's light to the moon, or when the earth gets between the moon and the sun. The eclipse will be visible over Asia, the Pacific, Australia, Europe and Africa.

The total eclipse will begin at 3:49 a.m. and last up to 4:51 a.m.

Palace: Dichaves owns account

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it supports the statement of defense lawyers that businessman Jaime Dichaves is the holder of the controversial Jose Velarde account at Equitable-PCI Bank. If so, according to acting Press Secretary Mike Toledo in a press briefing yesterday, then Dichaves really has nothing to do at all with the impeachment trial of President Estrada.

Toledo said Malacañang is supporting the observation made by defense counsel Raul Daza when he said the closure of the Velarde account deposited in Equitable-PCI Bank Binondo branch by Dichaves confirms his ownership of the controversial account.

Anti-Miriam drive

.IF THREE militant groups had their way, Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Juan Ponce Enrile would lose their reelection bids in the May elections. Party-list group Bayan Muna said it would not only seek its own congressional seat in the coming polls, but would actively campaign against "rabid" pro-Estrada senators among those sitting in judgment of the President at his impeachment trial.

"(We) are determined to campaign against candidates who refuse to uphold the people's verdict to kick President Estrada out of office," Bayan Muna president Satur Ocampo said during the party's 2nd National Convention at the University of the Philippines on Sunday.

Aptitude tests today

THREE million elementary and high school students will take this week the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) amid the strictest pre-exam leakage safeguards put in place in all schools nationwide.

Around 1.9 million sixth-grade students will take the NEAT early today while 1.1 million of fourth-year high school will take the NSAT on Friday, according to the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

Maceda at Comelec? Why?

PUTTING a "spin doctor" like Ernesto Maceda at the helm of the Commission on Elections would be "one of the dumbest decisions" President Estrada could ever make, opposition congressmen said yesterday.

The congressmen were reacting to reports quoting a Palace official as saying that Maceda, former Ambassador to Washington and now presidential spokesperson, was qualified to head certain government agencies, including the Comelec.

"For sure, it will trigger suspicions that with Maceda at the helm of the Comelec, the administration agenda is to steal the elections and not merely to cheat. Spin doctoring for an impeached President is not the best qualification for Comelec leadership," said Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) *Volt Contreras*

Oil firms cut prices by ₱.60/liter

THE "BIG Three" in the oil industry—Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc.—have cut gasoline prices by 60 centavos per liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos per liter effective yesterday afternoon and this morning.

New oil players Unioil Petroleum Corp. and Total Petroleum also reduced their prices, with Unioil slashing gasoline prices by 52 centavos and diesel prices by 42 centavos and Total cutting gasoline prices by 60 centavos and diesel prices by 50 centavos.

Three other small oil companies—Eastern Petroleum Corp., Seaoil Philippines Inc. and Flying V—cut retail fuel prices by as much as 25 centavos on Jan. 2.

"Competitive pressures prompted us to implement earlier the announced reduction," said Pilipinas Shell spokesperson Rey Gamboa.

Refiners are under pressure to cut rates because of falling world crude prices and a relatively stable foreign exchange rate in December.

The government earlier suggested oil companies cut prices by as much as 1 peso per liter.

Both Petron and Shell said they might cut prices further if crude prices remained the same after a meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Jan. 17, which might consider production cuts to boost crude prices.

"There's a possibility of a rollback again," said Petron spokesperson Antonio Pelayo, if crude prices did not rise this month.

Both companies do not plan to reduce the price of liquefied petroleum gas, used for cooking.

The price of Dubai crude, a benchmark used by local oil companies, fell to $21.65 a barrel in December from $30.32 per barrel in November, while the peso moved from only 49.91 to the dollar to 49.99 per dollar.

Higher world crude prices and a weaker peso last year prompted the major oil companies to raise retail fuel prices seven times between February and October, increasing rates by a third from end-1999 levels.

Pilipinas Shell, Petron and Caltex control about 3,000 service stations nationwide.

Christine Gaylican and Bloomberg

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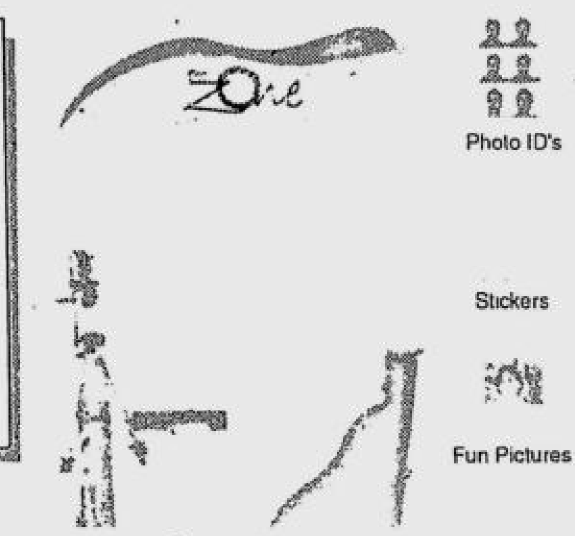

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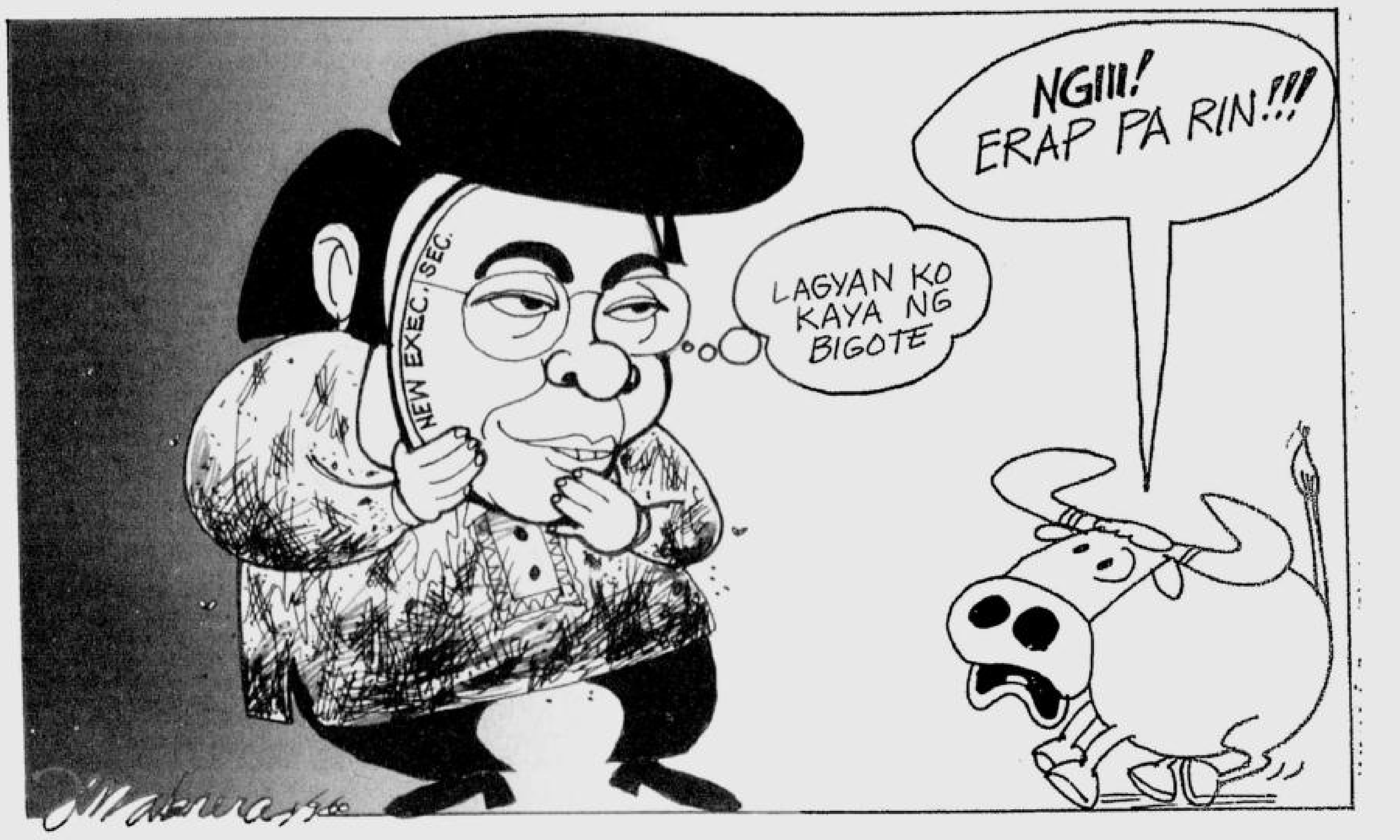
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Crizele

EDITORIAL

WE expected the astounding amount of negative comments generated by the INQUIRER's Page 1 photo on Dec.31 of 6-year-old Crizele Acusin being carried from the scene of the LRT bombings on Dec. 30.

In the picture Crizele is no longer the pretty and lovable girl that we later learned she was from her family. She had been blasted into a bloody pulp.

The INQUIRER welcomes the response, even the really nasty ones. They indicate that we have a lively dialogue going with our readers. They are telling us what they care about. Which is what a newspaper is all about. Which is the only way to find common ground on the most contentious issues of the day. Having said that, we need to point out the balance that we try every day to maintain between our readers' concerns and the responsibilities of a newspaper.

To sum up, the readers' adverse reactions made an excellent case against running Crizele's picture. Common to their arguments were: a lack of respect for the victims and a lack of regard for the pain of their families; exposure of the young to violence and its timing—oh, no, not on New Year's Eve. The last we couldn't do anything about.

These are the same thoughts—in fact, the very first—that ran through our minds as we considered using the Crizele photo. Deep down, we felt not quite right about using the picture. But an innocent child had been mangled. Something was very wrong here. The day the INQUIRER becomes overly cautious about hurting the sensibilities of the community, including its youth, is the day it quits practicing honest journalism. This is the kind of journalism that must be open to the controversial, the provocative, the shocking, the outrageous. And we have to add, the unpopular.

Yes, our own intial misgivings about publishing Crizele's picture as validated by the readers' feedback, has not been popular. But we had to choose between what was popular and what was important.

Sure, there were many other "bloody pictures" (our photographers have to be congratulated for outdoing themselves) to choose from as some of our readers had suggested. But not one quite captured the shock, the sorrow and the horror of that Bloody Saturday. Only Crizele's picture did. It was the one picture that summoned the level of rage that we wanted to extract from our society where corruption and violence had become routine.

Today, Crizele's picture has become the rallying point of enraged Filipinos demanding justice for the victims and the bereaved. It has become the symbol of the failures of the state whose sworn and primary duty is to protect the citizens. Crizele has become the symbol of everything that is wrong in our society that has to be made right so that there will never be another Crizele.

On April 19, 1995, the bombing of a federal building in downtown Oklahoma City killed 168, including 19 children at a day-care center. There was this Associated Press photo of a fireman cradling the limp and bloody body of one-year-old Baylee Almon-Kok that said it all for a horrified world. The dead baby's mother, Aren, never wanted to see the picture again. But it was in magazines, newspapers, TV and in the Internet. It always hurts, Aren says even today. Yet, she also says that she does not mind bearing the pain if it can save other people's lives. Aren now serves as a spokesperson for a private group called Protecting People First. Part of her role is to award safety certificates that bear that most painful picture of her dead daughter. That picture won for AP's Charles Porter the 1996 Pulitzer Prize.

Purely by coincidence, the INQUIRER photographer who shot the picture, Erik Arazas, happened to be in the Blumentritt area when the LRT bomb went off. While his colleagues still had to rush to the scene, Arazas was already there. He was the only one who photographed Crizele.

We happen to believe that there's no such thing as a coincidence. The pioneer in mind-body medicine, Deepak Chopra, calls it synchronicity. Everything in our field of awareness is connected to everything else. Modern mystics like Joseph Campbell believe coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous in our daily lives. But the divine is always there to lead us to the right path. It is only for us to discover. As we believe we did when we decided to publish Crizele's picture.

It's wrong to force Metro's trash on others

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SECRETARY Robert Aventajado and Chair Jejomar Binay of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority wasted a whole year without finding another dump for Metro Manila's garbage. They knew the San Mateo landfill would be closed at the end of the year, yet they did not give priority to finding an alternative site. They knew that residents of other municipalities and provinces would not want their backyards to be the dumping grounds of other people's trash and would resist efforts of the national government to force the trash on them. Yet they insisted on exporting the wastes of Metro Manila to other municipalities.

Now huge mounds of stinking garbage are accumulating on the streets of Metro Manila. Garbage collectors are not collecting them because there is no place in which to dump them. Aventajado and Binay were confident they could bribe and bulldoze the "provincianos" of Semirara island in Antique to accept Metro Manila's trash. But they did not reckon with the fighting spirit of the "provincianos" who were able to secure a 20-day temporary restraining order from the court.

So the two barges loaded with 4,000 tons of garbage cannot unload their cargo on Semirara. And all that Aventajado is doing is to have his lawyers file a petition with the Court of Appeals to lift the TRO. Instead of trying to find other solutions to the garbage crisis, he is relying only on the lawyers to overturn the TRO. What if the Court of Appeals finds their petition without merit and refuses to order the lifting of the TRO? What will happen to Metro's garbage? What will happen to the health of its residents?

I suspect Aventajado and Binay are deliberately forcing a garbage crisis to force the courts to decide in their favor. Why not? They succeeded before; they can do it again.

Twice before, the national government itself violated our laws by establishing the San Mateo landfill on a watershed, a portion of the Marikina Watershed Reservation. The Aquino administration started it with only five hectares despite the opposition of resident farmers. The Ramos administration expanded the five hectares to more than 100 hectares in violation of the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, which provides that no portion of a protected area like a watershed can be segregated and made into a dump. This killed farms and orchards (one farmer died, heartbroken, when he saw his orchard being leveled by the bulldozers of the MMDA contractor). It polluted the waters of the Wawa River which used to be the principal source of Metro Manila's drinking water. It polluted the surrounding countryside with garbage blown by the wind and by the hordes of flies bred by the trash.

In spite of the fact that the landfill was a clear violation of our environmental laws, the national government did not do anything to correct this anomaly even with the recommendation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that the dump "was a big mistake and should be transferred elsewhere."

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga and his Kilosbayan and the governments of Rizal, San Mateo and Antipolo filed a case with the Supreme Court. In spite of the clear merit of the case, the Court refused to rule on it and instead sat on the case for years. Until now, it has not decided the case. San Mateo is now closed not because the Court ordered its closure but because the people themselves decided that they had enough and forced the closure.

Why did the Supreme Court sit on the Kilosbayan petition? Because there was a garbage crisis in Metro Manila and there was no other place in which to throw its wastes. Instead of enforcing the law, the Court played blind and deaf because of the garbage crisis.

Early last year, the people of San Mateo and Antipolo barricaded the roads leading to San Mateo to prevent garbage trucks from dumping their loads there. Again, the MMDA used the "garbage crisis" as an excuse to persuade the Rizaleños to allow the dumping of garbage in San Mateo until the end of the year.

Now Aventajado and Binay are using the garbage crisis again to force the Court of Appeals to lift the TRO issued by the Antique court. Or perhaps to force the Rizaleños to allow the re-opening of the landfill temporarily. Or to force the reopening of the Carmona dump. O[illegible] force Quezon City to open Payatas to the du[illegible]cks of other municipalities.

When will Aventajado and Binay a[illegible] the fact that they have no right to force Met[illegible]sh on other localities? Metro Manila shou[illegible]ow its own garbage in its own territory. D[illegible]unish other residents with our wastes.

But where in Metro Manila? I'v[illegible] this before and I'll say again: Other count[illegible] such as Japan and the United States, have be[illegible]using garbage to reclaim the sea. This [illegible] been done without damaging the environment.

The trick is to grind the garbage, add a binding material and compress it into blocks that are as hard and impervious to water as solid concrete. These blocks are then used to reclaim the sea. In due time, Metro Manila will have hundreds of hectares of valuable reclaimed land for free. Instead of spending billions of pesos for landfills and offending (olfactorily and emotionally) the people of other municipalities, the MMDA will earn trillions of pesos in reclaimed land.

* * *

TODAY's Erap joke:

A starlet was rehearsing a scene in which she was supposed to cry but cannot.

Starlet: I'm sorry *direk*, I just cannot make myself cry. I've thought of all the sad things that happened to me, but tears just don't come to my eyes.

Director: *Madali lang 'yan*. Just think that your father is Erap and your mother is Miriam. *Mapapahagulgol ka ng iyak*!

Gainers, losers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S one more way the impeachment trial has done the country a world of good. It has raised the quality of the Senate in particular and Philippine politics in general.

I've said it before: If the senators would only devote their energies to doing their jobs rather than attending to their sidelines, such as cockfighting, making movies and hosting television programs, they would improve legislation by leaps and bounds. At the very least, if the requirements of being senator, which are to be adhered to strictly on pain of impeachment, were to attend sessions every day, participate actively in the Senate hearings (or keep awake), and toil under a *bastonero* who looked like Hilario Davide Jr., movie stars and basketball players would be vastly discouraged from wanting to become one.

In one fell swoop, the impeachment has arrested the monumental slide of Philippine politics into entertainment, the kind that doesn't entertain. Only four or five months ago, I was in Tina Monzon Palma's show, along with Reli German and Joey Marquez, talking about the prospect, or threat, of entertainers overrunning government. They were all poised to do so, the extreme case being Nora Aunor and Imelda Papin running for governor and vice governor in Camarines Sur. Metro Manila itself was a target of invasion, with movie stars planning to run as mayors and vice mayors in its various cities. All said they were much emboldened by the success of one Joseph Estrada. .

Well, if they have not been sufficiently discouraged by their idol finding himself in dire straits, and the spectacle of senators lately having to earn every centavo of their pay, they should be so by one more obdurate fact. Which is that the people who will win as senators and representatives this May will not be movie stars and basketball players. They will be the legal stars and political players in the current impeachment trial. The trial has completely negated the undue advantage of entertainers in media projection. Neither local movies nor the PBA—and the other basketball clubs—can compete with the impeachment trial. Not even "Rosalinda" can. In case you haven't noticed, the local networks have scrapped their regular programming in favor of live coverage of the trial, after ABS-CBN made it big pioneering in that direction.

That is why the VIP section of the Senate looks like the PBA during championship games these days, creaking with people who want the television cameras to imprint their faces on the voters' minds. But Joker Arroyo should be a shoo-in as senator—there is a God after all. I hope he runs and tops the field.

But the impeachment trial has improved Philippine politics in a more important way than that it has dispelled the threat of entertainers overrunning government. Which is that it has raised the quality of the debate in the Senate. I remember writing a column once comparing the days when senators like Jose Laurel, Claro M. Recto, Jose Diokno, and even Ferdinand Marcos would take to the floor and debate issues as though they were matters of life and death—which they were—and the days when Robert Jaworski, Ramon Revilla, Tito Sotto, and even Ernesto Maceda would be exercised only by presumed besmirching of the national honor by pornography and the Brunei Beauties. Well, the impeachment trial has brought back some of the luster.

I've always thought Raul Roco and Franklin Drilon, who are both lawyers, would do very well in it, and they have. As indeed Teofisto Guingona, who puts his points across in an impassioned way. He, not quite incidentally, was the first to ask for Erap to be impeached. (In the Senate at least, for as readers keep reminding me, I was the first to do so outside of it—in late 1999 when Erap brazenly trampled on the freedom of the press by mounting an ad boycott against the INQUIRER.)

But the true revelations, to go back to the senators, are Loren Legarda and Rodolfo Biazon. Legarda it was who, using journalistic rather than lawyerly skills, managed to get Clarissa Ocampo to tell her story the way stories ought to be told—without legalistic gobbledygook, as Biazon brilliantly suggested at one point. That story eventually yielded a gem, which was that Estelito Mendoza had taken part in an attempt by Erap's friends to defraud the public. Specifically, by turning over the Jose Velarde account to Jaime Dichaves. Yes, taking part. Of course, so shrewd a lawyer as Mendoza would never be found directly witnessing a criminal act, which would incriminate him—the movies tell us that. But that Dichaves et. al. should choose Mendoza's roof out of all the roofs in this country to hatch their malevolent scheme must tell us that some roofs are especially dedicated to giving refuge to the wicked.

Biazon has been consistently incisive and broadminded. He it was who gave the best perspective on fairness, when the lawyers were citing all sorts of legal angles to allow or prevent Ocampo from testifying. This was no ordinary trial, he said. Fairness didn't just mean fairness to Erap, it meant fairness to the witness, fairness to the senator-judges, fairness to the people and fairness to history.

All this has raised the standards by which senators must discourse and comport themselves in public as nothing has over the last three decades. Everyone is now at pains to be brilliant or lose face—or, worse, lose the elections. Of course, there is always the danger that we could lose all this after the trial and the elections. Of course, there is always the danger that the Senate could lapse back into silliness and frivolity afterward, the senators going back to a life of sloth or to their sidelines with a vengeance. Of course, there is always the danger that this could be part of our national tendency to rise to greatness for one brief shining moment and plunge into mediocrity afterward.

But that is up to us, the public. It is up to us to see that the gains are not lost. It is up to us to see to it that the senators (and other public officials) continue to live up to the measure they themselves have set by their conduct in the trial. It is up to us to see to it that only those senators who have shown themselves worthy to be senators remain as senators. It is up to us to see to it that only those candidates who can rise up to that exacting measure become senators.

We have the power of the vote. We have the power of public opinion. We have the power to take to the streets in praise or protest. Our future, as I keep saying, has always been in our hands. If only we would use those hands for useful purposes.

* * *

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Senators are not like the American jurors

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE APPOINTMENT of Edgardo Angara as executive secretary, a post generally acknowledged to be a de facto prime ministership, is obviously intended to blunt the argument that even if President Estrada were acquitted, he would no longer be able to govern effectively. The President's apologists would be pointing to the presence of Angara in Malacañang as assurance that things would still run and perhaps reasonably well. Angara is there to deodorize the Erap administration. The problem is that it was Estrada that was elected to govern the nation, not Angara. The public is being short-changed in this governance-by-delegation arrangement.

* * *

Many people suspect that Angara's appointment is part of a post-acquittal scenario. Frankly I'd like to see how the pro-acquittal senators could stand there and defend their acquittal vote before the entire nation in the light of the overwhelming evidence against the President. They have to have thick hides, strong stomachs and a lot of *apog* to be able to disregard with impunity the verdict of history. But it's a burden that even their children will have to carry.

* * *

My colleague Vic Agustin, who writes the popular "Cocktales" column in this paper, reported that a total of 110 out of the 750 homes in Makati's San Lorenzo Village have either for sale or for rent signs. On the other hand, I have it on good authority that 15 percent of the homes in Dasmariñas Village in Makati mortgaged to banks have already been taken over by those banks. That's how bad business is.

* * *

My neighbor on the opposite page, Neal Cruz, has noted the impatience and perplexity of citizens at the "slow and tedious progress of the (impeachment) trial." He said many are "not only confused but also infuriated by the technicalities that hinder fairness and the search for truth," and the way Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the presiding officer, allows the defense panel "to get away with what are obviously attempts to hide the truth through technicalities."

Cruz reported that former Senate President Jovy Salonga traced the root of the problem to the fact that many of the procedural rules borrowed from the Anglo-American system are "adversarial in nature." Salonga stressed in the passage quoted by Cruz that in the United States there is a mounting demand to change or nullify the adversarial process in public cases. He stressed that in this impeachment case, technical rules of evidence are the same rules of evidence being applied toward private litigants, which ought not to be the case, especially since this is a "public interest case." Said Salonga: "Our people are right to complain about technicalities that do not serve the cause of truth, fairness, transparency and accountability—the end which the Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Davide, seeks to achieve, even as the Court prepares for its centennial celebration on June 11, 2001."

* * *

Salonga forwarded to this columnist an advance copy of his editorial in Kilosbayan magazine, due to come out this Friday. It reminds senators that in the US jury system, the jurors are lay persons inexperienced in the law, but who find themselves charged with the task of deciding "questions of fact." Hence, these American jurors, who are normally ordinary citizens unfamiliar with the law and the ways of counsel, need some kind of guidance and protection from judges whose task is to rule on questions of law, as well as from "the danger of being misled by irrelevancies or by fraudulent or biased testimony" or those that play on their passions and prejudices. To protect these jurors, the judges developed a network of "exclusionary rules" known as "rules of admissibility."

* * *

Salonga argues, however, that this condition does not apply to majority of the senator-judges in the impeachment trial. He points out that a number of them are lawyers of stature, including former professors of law (Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Raul Roco and Rene Cayetano) and secretaries of justice (Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Franklin Drilon and Tito Guingona). The other senators, though they are not lawyers, are nonetheless outstanding in other careers, such as the military (Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, former chief of staff, and Sen. Gregorio Honasan, who retired as full colonel and was baron of his PMA class), medicine (Sen. Johnny Flavier), business (Sen. Serge Osmeña and Ramon Magsaysay) and the government service (Sen. Kit Tatad, Blas Ople and John Osmeña). Sen. Nikki Coseteng served three terms in the House.

* * *

In other words, except for a few, these senators had fairly sophisticated professional backgrounds.

As outstanding professionals, Salonga says, these senators therefore should have "considerable latitude" in admitting evidence that are now being objected to by the defense panel as "immaterial" or "irrelevant." After all, in the final evaluation of the case, these senators can ignore evidence that has no probative value, "instead of wasting so much time and effort in interminable wrangling on questions of admissibility." Salonga stressed that the senators sitting in the impeachment court are called "judges" and not jurors, precisely because they are judges both of the law and of the facts. "Hence they should know better than to involve themselves in pointless disputes on whether a given piece of evidence is immaterial or irrelevant."

* * *

What Salonga is saying is, *hindi gago ang karamihan ng mga senador;* neither are they near-illiterates, like some US jurors plucked from Plainsville, USA. The senators are, with few exceptions, intelligent human beings who have held responsible positions before they became senators. Thus, they can tell whether evidence has probative value or not, and how it will influence their decision to convict or acquit the President. Therefore, Salonga says, there shouldn't be too much of the prolonged debates between defense and prosecution on "admissibility" and "relevancy" of evidence.

* * *

What Salonga doesn't state, however, is that the reason the defense is constantly objecting to the admission of evidence is that most of it is so damaging to the President politically, especially since the trial is aired and watched on national radio and TV. Once these pieces of evidence are heard by the citizens, it becomes part of the collective mind-set toward a condemnation of President Estrada. The senators may split hairs over "probative value" and the defense can move to strike off the record damaging testimony such as that of Clarissa Ocampo, but to the citizens following the trial, such evidence can no longer be erased. This is why defense lawyers are being paid handsomely to block their disclosure

Meanwhile, truth is being suppressed. The question is, why should the Chief Justice allow them to block the disclosure of evidence?

Ambient sounds

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THOUGH the Senate has ordered that pesky "ambient sound" microphone removed, a funny thing happened to my TV set. Suddenly, I discovered that when I turned it on to the Senate impeachment hearing, I could hear what the honorable senator-judges were thinking! I tell you, the experience left me shaken and weepy. It was as if no less than the honorable Ma(i)d Miriam had pointed an accusing finger at me and ordered me escorted out of the chamber in full view of the world. I must confess I'd been aching to know what was going through the minds of the stoic, stone-faced senators during the long, stultifying testimony. But little did I know how upsetting the experience of actually hearing their thoughts would be. Anyway, here's my initial field report on the battlefield of the senators' minds.

* * *

FIRST, a caveat. At first, it was no more than Babel, as the senators' thoughts made themselves heard all at the same time. But gradually, by adjusting my volume control, I found that I could concentrate on one senator at a time. In time, it was not unlike reading those cartoon dialogue balloons over the senators' heads, my favorite part, by the way, of each issue of Pinoy Times. So this is how it went:

Sen. Loren Legarda-Leviste: How cold *naman dito. Buti na lang* I brought my favorite fuchsia pashmina shawl. *O tignan mo*, low-grade cashmere *lang yung kay* Nikki. How cheap *naman*. Will the Chief Justice mind if I bring out a compact to check my make-up? *Parang gusto kong magtanong sa* witness *mamaya, e*. But I'm afraid to approach the podium, my eyebrows might be crooked. That stupid driver *kasi* had to drive over a pothole while I was pencilling in my eyebrows! *Que barbaridad*! Golly gee...*Ayan, dumaan si Ka* Blas, maybe I can check out my eyebrows from his forehead.

Sen. Blas Ople: Why is Loren staring at me? Don't tell me she has designs on my remaining vestige of masculine pulchritude. At this point in time, all I want to do is stay in bed and tinker with my laptop. *Ke-ginaw-ginaw naman! Nakakaantok tuloy.*

Sen. Ramon Revilla: *O sinasabi ko na nga, hindi rin makatagal si Ka Blas. Ang daya talaga, o, nasa likod kasi siya, eh. Asan ba yang mga hinayupak na* camera *na 'yan, baka sa 'kin nanaman naka-*focus*, ah. May tinga pa naman sa ngipin ko, hindi ko makalkal.*

Sen. Pong Biazon: Sonamagun! More gobbledygook! I can't make heads or tails of what they're saying! Let's just fight this man to man!

* * *

SEN. Tessie Aquino-Oreta: Hi-hi-hi! How funny *naman* the joke of Sonny, o! *Malditang yan.* My gawd! How long *naman* this testimony! *Puede ba nilang palitan naman si Libarios, nakaka-antok magtanong. Ay...may* text *ako*! -text ng *Hi-hi-hi, itong si Sonny talaga, hanggang dito ba naman, nag-te-*text *ng* Erap joke!

Sen. Sonny O.: *Hi-hi-hi, sana mahuli ka uli ng* camera, Tessie. *Bruha kah*! Imagine, the reason *gani nangag-praning ako sa mikropono eh*, phallic symbol *daw*! Hoyy, I've seen bigger, *uno*!

Sen. Johnny Enrile: *Anyakit din*, look at those two! Giggling away like schoolgirls! How does Malacañang expect me to handle the defense of the President, with allies like these two numskulls! If I could only have them detained! Ah, Gringo-boy is really listening intently, good.. so long as he doesn't think he's entitled to his own thoughts.

Sen. Gringo Honasan: *Uy, Manong Johnny* is smiling at me. I know I'll get at least an Uzi from this. What kind of Uzi *kaya, sana yung* stainless steel, *yung* lightweight *pero* deadly *tumama*.

Sen. Kit Tatad: O Holy Mother of God, I'm having obscene thoughts about Shakira Yu! Be gonnnnne!

Sen. Nikki Coseteng: *Ayan, pinalitan na ni Moreno si Libarios. Type ko yata, matipuno* and doesn't his croaking voice sound utterly sexy? Ayyy.

Sen. Frank Drilon: Hmmm, *ako pa rin ang* best-dressed *dito, ah. Daig ko pa si Loren. Anong sinabi ng* pashmina *niya sa* sharkskin *ko*? Olive green *pa*'

* * *

SEN. Johnny Flavier: *Ano na naman ang tinatanong nito? Hindi lang nakaka-bobo ang* trial *na 'to, nakaka-liit pa. O, tingnan mo si Flaminiano, dapat siguro ginugulat ng mga kasama niya* from time to time, *parang na-embalsamo na yata 'yan, ah.*

Sen. Raul Roco: *Ang hina talaga ng* prosecution, o. *Kung ako lang yan, matagal nang na-*convict *si Erap*. Do these clowns think they'll do a better job together than I could do all on my own?

Sen. Jun Magsaysay: I knew I should have walked out of this body long ago. This is so boring. *Si Papa kasi* made serving in government look like so much fun. Why ain't I havin' fun? What's the latest text news *ba*?

Sen. Nene Pimentel: I wish *naman si* Chief Justice would wash his robe more often. I can't breathe with the smell of mothballs.

Sen. Rene Cayetano: *May* break *ba sa* testimony? *Tatayo na ba ako? Puede na ba? Ano kayang puede kong itanong? Ayan na.*

Sen. Tito Guingona: *Diyos ko, tumayo na naman si Kompanyero*. Someday, I'll tie his shoelaces together and let's see him make a fool of himself. *Si* Chief Justice *kasi eh, parating ako na lang ang pinag-iinitan.*

Sen. Tito Sotto: *Patawarin mo ako, mas magaling pang magpatawa itong si Cayetano kesa sa* Tito, Vic and Joey ah.

Sen. Jawo: *Ang kati-kati na ng alipunga ko, lekat na* camera *yan, o, hindi ko man lang matanggal ang sapatos ko.*

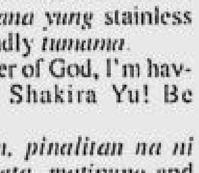
Sen. Serge Osmeña: *Mukhang mainit na naman ang ulo ni Miriam, ah. Baka pag-initan na naman ang bisita ko, sinabon na nga ako ni* Bettina for last time.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago: Now everyone's eyes are on me. That's the best way to catch public attention, you know, ackerding to the world experts. Wait a minute, is that an insolent smirk on that onlooker's face. Oh, *hi-hi, si Jun lang pala*. But no, there's that woman in white smiling at me, and that friar in black robe...What's going on? Crispin, Basilio...

City planning and Manila

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



THIS article is purely for the record, believing as I do that city planning in reference to our cities is an oxymoron. But there may be students of architecture who are interested in local history whether for their thesis or out of the belief that knowledge is valuable for its own sake.

The first conference of the Association of Philippine Architects was held in 1914 at the University of Sto. Tomas. On the list of chartered members, engineers were included like Ramon Irureta Goyena, dean of engineering at UST at the time. (The 1914 building El Hogar fronting the Pasig on Juan Luna is his work.) Actually there were more engineers listed than architects, but I think it meant that an engineer could also be an architect but not vice versa. There were three landscape architects on the list: Juan Arellano, Tomas Mapua and Tomas Arguelles.

There were two architects on the list whose works are less known: Carlos A. Barreto of 207 Mendoza, Quiapo, and Vicente L. Legarda of 110 Nebraska, Ermita, who was working as an architectural draftsman at the Bureau of Public Works and teaching at UST. Students may be interested in these two as subjects of research.

The observations read in the conference were by Santiago Artiaga, a professor of engineering at UST who was also the superintendent of streets and bridges for the City of Manila. Artiaga quoted a certain Nelson Lewis, chief engineer of the City of New York, on the definition of city planning: "It is the exercise of such foresight as will promote the orderly and sightly development of a city and its environs along rational lines, with proper regard for the health and convenience of the citizens and for the commercial and industrial advancement of the community."

The reason there was an interest in the subject at the time was that Manila was expanding and the colonial government was effecting rapid changes. As early as 1901, the city re-planning started. Street lines and widening were approved in 1903. Construction of parks, cemeteries, street curbs, pavements were given an impetus. For the curious, Manila had 240 *esteros* and 51 parks and plazas at the time.

But the modernization and improvement of Manila under the American's were done with reference to Daniel Burnham's 1905 plan, which Artiaga said he did not appreciate until he saw the "prominent place given to same at the Conference and Exhibition on City Planning...at Charlottenberg, Germany, held under the auspices of the Prussian Kingdom." Artiaga then proceeded to express his admiration for the plan, explaining that a good city plan would in effect achieve a beautiful city.

Actually Burnhan's objectives are still good standards for measuring any urban area: "(1) Development of water front and location of parks and parkways so as to give proper means of recreation to every quarter of the city. (*Underlining mine.*) (2) Street system securing direct and easy communication from every part of the city to every other part. (3) Location of building sites for various activities. (4) Development of waterways for transportation. (5) Summer resorts."

In 1914 the Malate Park was 80 percent completed, Cavite Boulevard, Ayala Boulevard, the Civic Center for the grouping of public buildings, the "Capitolio" (plans for which had not as yet been finished by the Bureau of Public Works). The Civic Center was to be located midway between San Luis and P. Burgos which made it nearer to the business area, Escolta, and within reach of the rest of the city as well as the railroad and the port.

Artiaga believed that the most important asset of any city was its population, "their number, moral condition, standard of living and prosperity." The last was to be judged, "not by the beautiful frontages of rich men's houses and the width of our avenues, but by the back nipa houses in the interior lots and the congested condition of conglomerated shacks in the heart of Tondo district, which are planted on low and wet grounds not fit for human life."

Danger signals then, which have now evolved into ecological and environmental disasters, were already in place when Dr. Trinidad H. Pardo de Tavera mentioned in one of his lectures that viewed from Antipolo, Manila no longer looked like a city of church spires but a city of smoking chimneys. Already there were complaints regarding smoke pollution. Manila was then zoned into districts of light and strong materials, but Artiaga proposed that the city be subdivided into "zones where buildings are to be allowed in rows or detached, zones where houses are to be built with front gardens, and a graded code of occupancy of lot." There was, of course, to be a site for factories.

Seeing how the original plan has been thoroughly botched, my humble suggestion is that we start over again. It may sound far-fetched but after all the capital of Thailand is on its third location, Malaysia is laying the foundation for a new one, and China has had several capitals over the past centuries. This will truly be a Filipino first capital without the encumbrances of the past. Hopefully, the planners will start with zoning, adequate roads, sewers and a more modern system of garbage disposal. Besides, think of all the money to be made.

Cruisin' life

YOUNGBLOOD

Russian Queen

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MY housemates are freaks. And I think I'm going out of my mind trying to understand them. But if I succeed in doing that, I suppose that would make me one of them. That would be the last thing they need: crazy freak. For then who would listen to them, love them and care for them if not naïve me?

Maybe I should explain why I fondly label them as freaks. I just cannot seem to find the right words to describe them. No, they are not mutants, schizophrenics, maniacs or anything out of a scary movie. They are normal-looking people—in fact, better than most people I know. Which explains why I am trying very hard to maintain my sanity and not to let my puritanical, prejudiced, sanctimonious self take over and condemn the three of them.

Let me begin by telling you that I am the only student living in the apartment-cum-boardinghouse that I share with seven other women. So, I am the baby of the household at 18. I have become close to every one of them and I call them *ate*. All of us know the details of each other's life, so that being the youngest hasn't prevented me from being privy to the details of their love lives.

Ate Lani has a steady boyfriend of three years who loves her very much. The only problem is that he tends to be very jealous and possessive. My housemate, being attractive, still has lots of suitors courting her even if they know she already has a boyfriend. In fact, right now, she has two "unofficial" boyfriends she can call whenever things between her and her steady are not sailing smoothly.

Whenever her boyfriend is around and these "unofficial" boyfriends call, all of us cover up for her. At first, it was fun for me and for my *ates*. I particularly got a kick giving wild excuses to these guys. I thought I was getting even for all that they had done to our sex.

Later, however, it became annoying. My conscience (voila!) started to bother me. Now, I am worried that one day, one of us would mess things up and she'd be found out.

Don't think that we just let her do as she pleases. We pity her loyal boyfriend and we tell her that she has got to stop. But, well, as Cindy Lauper once sang, "Girls just wanna have fun."

I suppose you know what I will be saying next: I don't approve of what she's doing. Not that she'd need my approval or anything since she's old enough to know what's right and what's not.

But I can understand her in a way. I know it is intoxicating to be the center of attention of many guys all at the same time. My point is that if she wants to have many boyfriends, she should not lead on someone who's serious with her.

Come to think of it, why do I even care? It's her life anyway. Growing up really sucks.

Then there's my Ate Ricci who my housemates say is a lesbian already. I refuse to believe that. I thought I had nothing against homosexuals. Up to now I enjoy the company of "*badings*" (I think they are very talented people). But a lesbian is quite another thing. And my own housemate at that. It's too bitter a pill for me to swallow because I am very close to her.

Now, you might ask, if I am close to her, how come I cannot understand her? But that's just it. Being confronted with reality is like having dung shoveled to your face. I feel cheated. Why isn't life like what you expect it to be? It's too damn confusing.

When Ate Ricci's relationship with her officemate was just starting, I thought theirs was just a normal friendship like what me and my housemates share. I didn't think it was weird that Ate Ricci's friend was always there at the apartment—until my other *ates* told me that theirs was a boyfriend-girlfriend set-up.

I was shocked. Naively, I denied it, protesting that they should not be malicious. I could not believe that my other *ates* would invent such a thing.

I started to observe Ate Ricci and her officemate more closely. Then it dawned on me that I was deceiving myself all the time.

That was when I realized that I didn't want to see things that were unpleasant to me. I live in what is called a selective reality. In other words, a fool's paradise.

Maybe I am homophobic.

Lastly, there's my Ate Rina, whose boyfriend is already married. She says they're not doing anything wrong. Maybe not yet (already I am a cynic). But something can happen when they go to Baguio soon as they are planning to do. We tell her that she's only going to get hurt but she won't listen. Fine! She loves the two-timing bastard.

So now, you can see that they are all freaky in a way. But I do know that given a choice, they wouldn't be riding in the boats that they are in now. Don't get me wrong. I love them all. That's why I am worried about them.

My other *ates* say I shouldn't worry because they are happy. Yeah, right, but for how long, the cynic in me wonders. I guess we all know that.

But then again, why do I even bother? It's their lives, not mine. They are old enough to know better. So why do I fret?

I guess there's this part of me that just doesn't want to admit that the world I live in really sucks. I want to be 10 years old again when the uncertainties and woes of adulthood were eons away. When everything was simple and uncomplicated—and beautiful. Not here in this age when I learn that nothing I was taught really matters anymore. Like fidelity. Like gender. Like love. Not here, now when everything crumbles just when you thought the cruising is smooth.

I ponder and ponder until my head starts pounding.

Reality is too much for me, I accept that now. Maybe it's cowardly to shut out things that don't sit well with me but if it's the only way for me to get going, then I will.

It's going to take me a long time to accept that I can't spend the rest of my life worrying about people's souls. Ha-ha, that's a laugh. What am I talking about? I am not even a devout practitioners of my faith. I don't even know for sure if there's a heaven.

Maybe I am a hypocrite.

Russian Queen, 18, is the pen name of broadcast communications sophomore at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

Notice to Youngblood contributors

Contributors to Youngblood who haven't received their checks are requested to inquire with the PDI cashier on Friday.

THEY SAID

Higher standard

"If our standards are high for our low-ranking soldiers, shouldn't our standards be higher for the Commander in Chief?"
—Former President Fidel V. Ramos

Bleak Christmas

"Peace and goodwill are having difficulty breaking out into the sunshine. Many people are hungry and the Christmas lights are sparse. I hope it never comes to this again."
—Sen. Raul Roco

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Volunteers for public safety

LETTERS

We are a national NGO of former leading cadres of the underground Left from 1975 onwards. We may have left the mainstream but we have re-converged to humbly help address pressing socio-political concerns in our society today, especially after the recent heartless bombings in Metro Manila.

We condemn the perpetrators of the bombing, as most of its victims happened to be like six-year-old Crizele Acusin who are supposed to become the torch bearers of our country's future, or the two brave policemen who died while defusing the bomb. We also condemn the superiors of the police officers for allowing the two to do their task without safety gadgets, putting their lives in jeopardy.

Whoever are the culprits and whatever is the real motive behind this incident, one thing is very clear, that it is the innocents who were victimized by this madness. And the victims could have been your or me.

In light of this, we call on those alarmed by such a wanton and mindless massacre and feel very threatened, to join us in the formation of volunteers for public safety. We see the need for such an organization not to take over the responsibility of some government agencies but because the people themselves ought to rise and do something to make the culprits know we are aware and on a constant look-out for our collective safety from here on.

The recent bombings may only be the start of more chaos and the killing of more innocent lives. Surely we aren't going to just sit down and watch it happen. We are already being made to starve by the present political and economic crisis. We must not let the Philippines become another Lebanon, an Israel or an Indonesia.—**ELMER S. ARGANO, secretary-general, Union for Fresh Leadership, 15D First St., Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City**

Betting justice will prevail

I SUPPORTED Anders Hultman after his daughter was shot by Claudio Teehankee Jr. I helped raise money for legal expenses. I was in the media-crowded room when the Hultman family was awarded record damages that wiped the smirk off Teehankee's face.

Anders had persisted like a bulldog, even if the foreign community doubted that "the big fish" would ever go to jail. When he got a life sentence, they said he would be out in six months!

I offered a bet against this. Only one put up cash and he lost since the murderer is still doing time. He was one of the first "big fish" to be hooked. I like backing winners.

Anders has returned to collect the last payment of the damages, he told me at dinner. This victory for justice paved the way for other "big fish" to fall, like Mayor Antonio Sanchez and Rep. Romeo Jalosjos.

Now, the largest fish is on trial, President Joseph Ejercito Estrada. Whether he is guilty or innocent, I am sure that justice will prevail. I have placed bets on it.—**EARL K. WILKINSON, Makati City**

What happened to pension?

I APPLIED for my retirement pension in November 1999, and the Cebu branch told me that my monthly contributions was short of seven months. After my last payments I submitted all the requirements and my ABR to the Cebu branch. Last Oct. 30 and Dec. 5, I sent a letter to Joel Palacios with all my documents and payments.

Last week I went to our Cebu branch but the person in charge told me that the Manila office had not replied.

So I would like to know what has happened and if I can now avail myself of my pensions.—**JESUS CINCO, 36 Simeon St., Cebu City**

Never voted for Osmeña

EVER since Sen. John Osmeña went into politics, whether as senatorial aspirant or in any political proceedings, I never voted for him, never agreed with his opinions on economic and political matters. Probably, I never will. That's because to me, you are the epitome of my bad dreams.—**RUDSEN B. PARFAN, Batangas City**

Different ways of dealing with corruption initiative

YOUR article "Thailand battles greatest foe: corruption," struck me as very similar to our country's present political crisis. In Thailand, corruption is automatically shrugged off with a helpless sigh of "This is the Thai way." In the Philippines, nonetheless, we watch with helpless amusement as our leaders use their power and influence to amass wealth, declaring, "This is the Pinoy way."

Indeed in both countries corruption is devastating. It is the source of most of the society's ills. It is the nations' greatest enemy.

But in fairness to the Thais, they are willing to fight corruption and they are succeeding. In our country, we are content to point accusing fingers at the culprits.

President Estrada is only a symbol of an even larger problem embedded in our present system. Perhaps, when the political dust settles down, we will follow the initiative that Thailand has set before us. Perhaps we will recognize our real foe, corruption.—**MARICEL E. MARIANO, 438 Dampol, 1st Pulilan, Bulacan**

Worlds apart

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

RECENT events once again show how we are a nation divided, not so much by ethnicity, ideology, or even by being anti- or pro-Erap, as by class.

First there was the incident during last week's impeachment trial when GMA cameraman Jose Canlas was ordered to testify, on the spot, after Sen. John Osmeña found an unauthorized microphone and claimed it was being used to pick up the senators' conversations. After a series of surprise witnesses, we got Canlas, a surprised—astonished and bewildered—witness. As a cameraman from a large TV network, Canlas knew a few million eyes—the entire nation, plus Filipinos living overseas—were upon him. The hapless cameraman was rattled but tried to keep up a cheerful demeanor by smiling. What he got was a rebuke from Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.: "Do not smile, Mr. Witness." "Sorry sir," Canlas meekly replied.

Sen. Robert Jaworski did the questioning and, to his credit, started by assuring Canlas, "Just relax." Canlas explained that the microphone was put there by another technician to catch the "ambience" in the Senate hall. Asked if he heard a lot of "*usapan*," Canlas answered yes.

It was so obvious though that Canlas was referring to the testimony and exchanges among lawyers; he was probably puzzled why people were so concerned because after all, wasn't media supposed to be taping the testimony? For the paranoid senators, "*usapan*" meant private conversations. There again was an example of "Filipino" being used by Filipinos without quite understanding each other.

Davide's admonition to Canlas not to smile, however mild, also shows how we are divided by class to the point that we sometimes do not know how to read fellow Filipinos' body language. Many Filipinos smile, even crack jokes, when they're nervous, and the greater the anxiety, the broader the smile. This puzzles Westerners, and upper-class Filipinos, who often think it's inappropriate or even disrespectful, which is why, I think, Davide reprimanded Canlas.

I've been guilty myself of this cultural oversight. Once in our office, during a very tense period when there were some personnel problems, one young officemate passed my desk with what I felt was a smirk and she got a scolding from me. "Don't you do that with me," I told her.

A few hours later, she came to me and apologized but explained the she did that when she was nervous. A smirk is something Westerners and Westernized Filipinos read into a smile. The closest Tagalog term is *ngiting aso*, which isn't quite the same either.

Eventually, Canlas' testimony was cut short when a more level-headed Sen. Aquilino Pimentel suggested that they use another venue to clarify matters with GMA-7. The television station apologized for the microphone but said it was, as Canlas said, for capturing "ambience" (actually ambient sounds) and that there was no attempt to bug the senators.

As far as I know, no one has apologized to Canlas for the way he was treated and made to testify without counsel or any kind of briefing.

Let's leave the Canlas incident and move on to Rosalea Torlao. That's the mother of Joe Marwin, a three-year-old boy injured during the Rizal Day bombings and who ended up in a hospital four days before he was reunited with his mother.

The boy's family lives in a squatter colony in Bacoor, Cavite. That Black Saturday, he and his father had left Cavite to go to Valenzuela to visit relatives, and ended up in one of the fateful LRT coaches. The blast killed the father and seriously injured the child. For days, the hospital staff could not track down the boy's relatives. The toddler wasn't able to name his father, or anyone else in his family. The child, whose left leg had to be amputated, became the focus of media stories, featured on newscasts every day, every night but no one came to claim him.

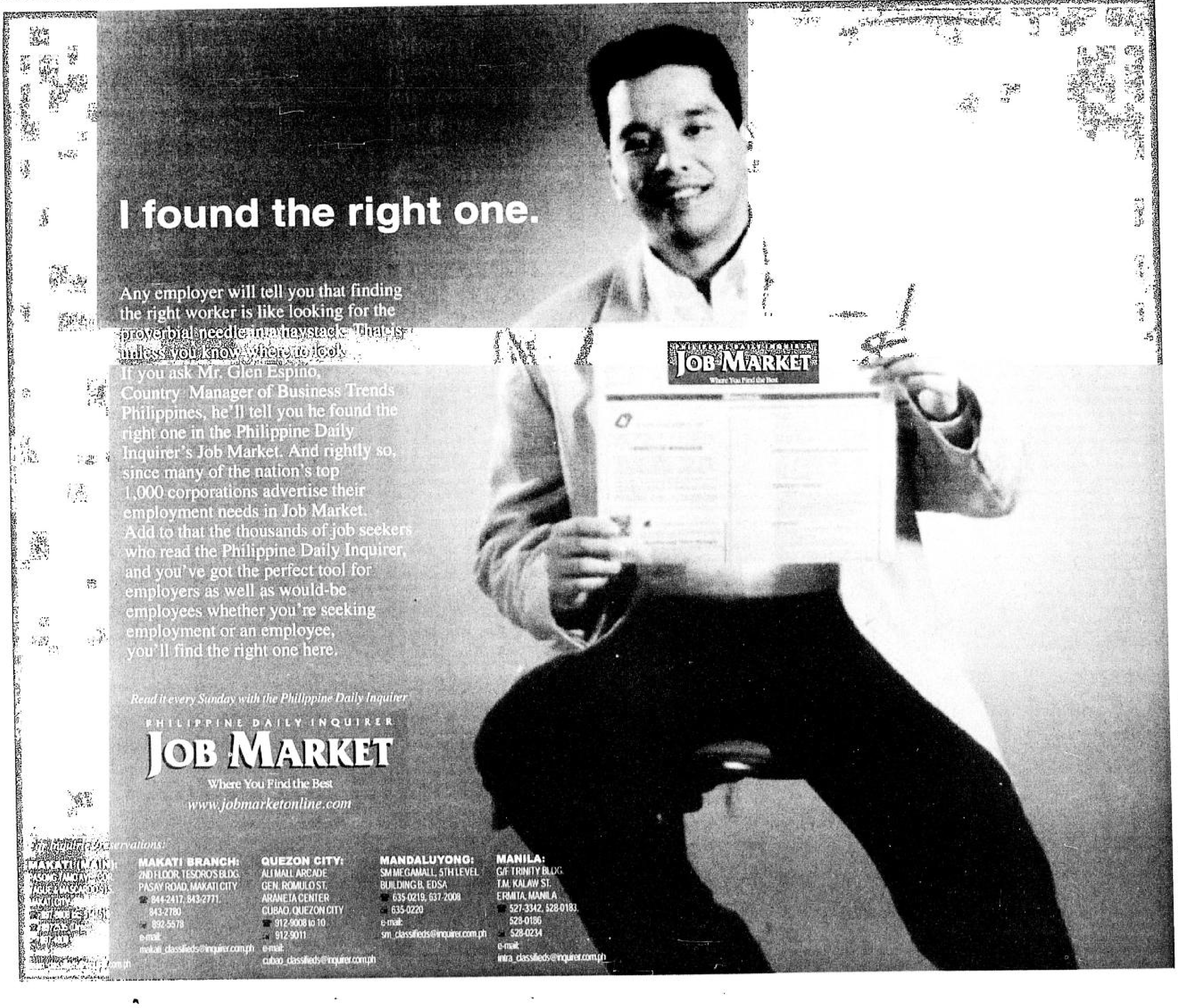
It turned out that Marwin's mother, left behind with her two other children, aged two and one, had been worried about her husband and eldest son not returning but was clueless as to what happened. She had no television and had a radio, which she couldn't operate because she didn't have electricity.

There are two versions of what happened next. One is that Rosalea saw the boy on a neighbor's television, while another story is that it was Rosalea's aunt who saw a newscast and informed the mother. But even after Rosalea learned about her son's plight, she couldn't go to Manila and eventually had to seek the help of ABS-CBN, which finally arranged to reunite the mother and son.

We gush over the wonders of information technologies that enable a Filipino living in New York to read the INQUIRER on the Internet, hours before most Filipinos in the Philippines get their hard copies. Because of satellite broadcasting, a Filipino in Bahrain can watch live one of our television shows, or the impeachment trial, and call in their questions or opinions. Then, too, we've got the cell phones which, if we are to believe the television ads, you can now use to order and pay for a pizza delivery to your kids while you're caught in a traffic gridlock. Yet here was Rosalea, four days with a missing husband and son yet cut off from the world, unable to do anything except worry.

The digital divide—the difference in access to the new information and communications technologies—isn't just between developed and developing countries but, within nations, between classes. The divide seems to widen by the day as we drift farther away from each other, differentiated by language, clothes and even by body language. The irony is that as the world becomes smaller, we Filipinos find we're living worlds apart.

Comments can be sent to miguel@pinoykasi.org.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The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

MEMORIAL REUTERS

Villagers pray on a memorial stupa filled with skulls of victims of the Khmer Rouge on the outskirts of Phnom Penh. Cambodians marked the 22nd anniversary of the end of the genocidal Khmer Rouge "killing fields" regime and others protested a Vietnamese occupation, Jan. 7.

Clinton tells Israel to divide land with PLO

NEW YORK—President Bill Clinton told the people of Israel that their land is also the Palestinians' homeland and "there is no choice but for you to divide this land into two states for two people."

Clinton also urged the Palestinians in a major address Sunday to find the courage to accept his framework for a negotiated settlement and "not hold out for the impossible more."

He vowed to use his remaining days in the White House to narrow differences between Israel and the Palestinians, but with less than two weeks left he made no prediction of success.

"We've got a mess on our hands," Clinton said.

In a speech to the Israel Policy Forum, a think-tank on the Middle East, Clinton disclosed key elements of his framework for a negotiated settlement and said it was a fair one that "responds to each side's essential needs if not to their utmost desires."

He said he was sending veteran US mediator Dennis B. Ross to the region this week to talk to Israeli and Palestinian leaders again. Ross will seek their approval for an accord that would give the Palestinians a state with its capital in Jerusalem and give Israel a Jewish Jerusalem "that is larger and more vibrant than any seen in history."

On Palestinian refugees, a key sticking point, Clinton appeared to hold to his position that they should have the right to return to a Palestinian homeland—not to Israel—or to help in finding new homes, whether in the Arab countries in which they now live or elsewhere.

Israel cannot be expected to take in an unlimited number of refugees and thereby "undermine" its purpose in being, he said.

The president said the incoming Bush administration was not bound by his proposals. "These parameters originated with me and will go with me when I leave office," he said.

Addressing the people of Israel before a largely Jewish audience, Clinton said "you have hardly had one day of peace and quiet since your state was created." *AP*

Thaksin expects coalition to take shape by weekend

BANGKOK—Thailand's prime minister-in-waiting Thaksin Shinawatra said Monday he expects his coalition to take shape by the weekend after his party swept the general election.

According to unofficial results, Thaksin's Thai Rak Thai (Thai Love Thai) party won 257 of the 500 seats in the House of Representatives, trailed by the Democrats of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai with 125 seats.

If the results are confirmed, it would be the first time a party would have won an absolute majority, or a majority of votes in Thailand where coalition governments have been the norm.

But Thaksin, the billionaire founder of Thailand's biggest telecommunications conglomerate, has indicated that despite the majority he would form a coalition to shore up his party's legislative strength.

He told reporters that the shape of his coalition should be clear by Friday, consisting three parties he did not name. He said no agreements had been reached yet.

"I have one month to form a coalition . . . The people have given me time to find capable ministers and to form a stable government," he told the state Radio Thailand.

The Thai Rak Thai's likely partners are two parties led by former prime ministers: New Aspiration party of Chavalit Yongchaiyudh which won a projected 34 seats and Chart Thai party led by Banharn Silapa-archa, which won about 39 seats.

Thai Rak Thai struck a chord among voters in Saturday's poll with its populist vision to kickstart an economy still struggling from the Asian financial crisis that struck in 1997. The Thai stock market rallied 3.4 percent on Monday on the result. *AP*

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IVORY COAST TURMOIL

Mutinous troops seize TV facilities

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast—Mutinous soldiers seized control of state broadcast facilities Monday amid the sound of heavy gunfire, calling on comrades to join in an apparent attempt to take power in this West African nation.

Beginning about 4 a.m., state radio, which had earlier gone off the air, began playing the national anthem and a man who did not identify himself read a brief statement.

"At the hour that we speak the country has undergone another page of our history. Radio and television are currently in the hands of the military," he said. "I want to reassure the population that their security is guaranteed. . . I ask all our brothers in arms to align themselves."

The sound of near-constant machinegun fire and occasional heavy weapons fire could be heard from the area near the state broadcasting facilities, which are in the exclusive suburb of Cocody.

Prime Minister Affi N'Guessan said small groups of soldiers had attacked state broadcasting offices in the commercial capital of Abidjan. The move, he said, was an attempt to seize power in a country, which has been wracked by turmoil.

He said the government already had taken control of the television, which displayed a map of the Ivory Coast early Monday, and was in the process of retaking control of the radio.

Witnesses earlier said they heard gunfire near the downtown home of President Laurent Gbagbo but N'Guessan said, "the president is safe."

Neither the motivation nor the number of people involved in the power grab were known.

Ivory Coast has seen more than a year of political and ethnic chaos, and there have been rumors of divisions within the military. There have also been rumors of an attempted comeback by ousted junta leader Gen. Robert Guei.

The instability began with a coup led by Guei in December 1999 that shook the country's reputation for stability. It was followed by two major military uprisings, tumultuous elections and a brutal wave of killings.

Presidential elections to restore democracy in October led to more violence when Guei tried to steal a win, leading to a popular uprising that brought Gbagbo to power.

But Gbagbo's triumph rapidly disintegrated into political and ethnic fighting between his supporters and those of rival opposition leader, Alassane Dramane Ouattara. *AP*

Cops nab food firm managers

JAKARTA—Indonesian police arrested two Japanese managers of a seasoning manufacturer whose use of pork-based seasonings has outraged Muslims in the world's most populous Islamic nation, a spokesperson said Monday.

Japanese-owned PT Ajinomoto Indonesia has been under attack since it was revealed last week that the company produced a flavor enhancer containing enzymes grown on pork fat, which Islamic law forbids Muslims from eating.

Lt. Col. Bachrul Alam of the Jakarta police said president Mitsuo Harakawa was arrested on Sunday. The company's deputy head Yasushi Oda was detained in Indonesia's second-largest city of Surabaya.

Both men were charged with violating consumer protection laws and face up to five years in jail if convicted. Six other company officials, including another Japanese national, were arrested on Saturday.

The company is a subsidiary of Ajinomoto Co., Japan's largest seasoning maker. Phone calls to the Tokyo headquarters were answered with a recording saying that officials were unavailable Monday, a national holiday in Japan.

About 90 percent of Indonesia's 203 million people are Muslim, and many follow Islamic dietary laws against pork.

Ajinomoto produces a monosodium glutamate-based seasoning that had been labeled as "halal"—Arabic for "allowed" for Muslim consumption—despite the use of the pork-based enzyme.

The Indonesian government ordered the product withdrawn from shelves after a religious group that certifies foods issued warnings about the seasoning. *AP*

Taliban rules death penalty for converts

KABUL—Afghanistan's hardline Taliban rulers Monday announced the death penalty for anyone who converts from Islam to another religion and for any non-Muslim found proselytizing.

The newest pronouncement made by the Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar was given over the Taliban-run Radio Shariat.

Omar charged other faiths, particularly Christianity and Judaism, of trying to convert Muslims and of seeking to demonize the pure Islam practiced by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban.

"The enemies of Muslims are trying to eliminate the pure Islamic religion throughout the world," said Omar in his radio message.

The Taliban practice a harsh brand of Islam in the 95 percent of the country under their control.

They have outlawed women from working and have stopped all schooling for girls beyond eight years old. They also have ordered women to wear the all encompassing burqua. Men are required to wear beards, pray in the mosque. Most forms of light entertainment have been banned in Afghanistan.

Television has been outlawed, music other than religious songs are no longer allowed.

Omar also announced a five-year jail term to bookstore owners found selling material critical of Islam and about other religions.

Despite the Taliban's harsh edicts those of other faiths in Afghanistan have been allowed to practice their religion.

In the Afghan capital of Kabul a large Sikh and Hindu community worship at several temples in the city. Their music is allowed and their temples left untouched.

A lone rabbi also lives in Kabul in the center of the war-ravaged city. Rabbi Ishaq has refused to leave Afghanistan although most of the country's Jewish community left when the former Soviet Union invaded in 1979.

Ishaq, however, refused to leave saying he wanted to protect the community's synagogue.

In his edict Omar also warned his countrymen to be wary of Muslims who profess a more liberal version of their faith.

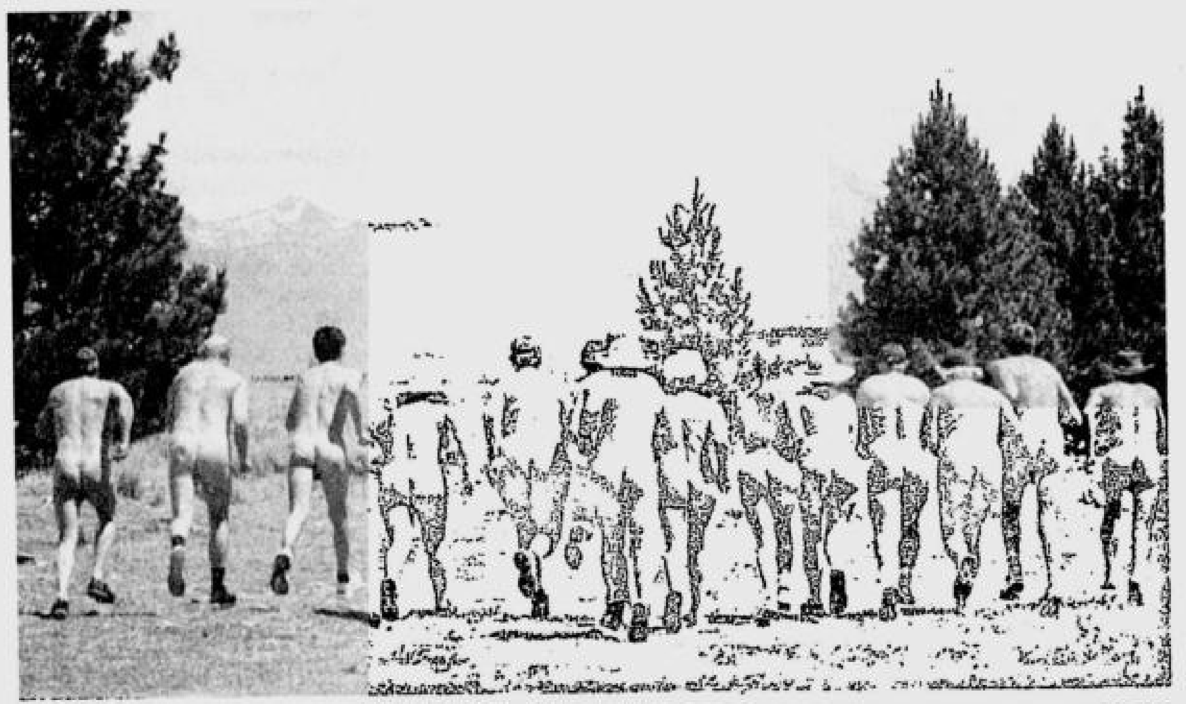
It's not clear what prompted Omar's radio address.

The Taliban are in relatively firm control of most of the country. Their opposition, led by ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani, rules in about five percent of the country.

Fighting has raged in recent weeks in central Bamiyan province, where the Taliban lost and later regained control of the key city of Yakaolong.

On Sunday, the Taliban reported regaining Yakaolong, a key city because it overlooks a highway that links the north and south of the country.

There were reports of more fighting early Monday. *AP*



FUN RUN REUTERS

Contestants head off in New Zealand's first-ever nude fun run at Lake Tekapo, Jan. 7. The Bare Buns event, with 65 runners (and a few walkers), set off on a curvaceous cross-country course, crossing the finishing line covered in smiles and not much else in some cases.

Pinochet defies court order to undergo medical exams

SANTIAGO—Openly challenging the judge seeking to try him on human rights charges, former dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet disobeyed a court order Sunday to undergo tests intended to determine his fitness for trial.

Pinochet failed to show up at Santiago's Army hospital for the tests Judge Juan Guzman had ordered. Guzman and medical experts appointed to conduct the tests later left the hospital without commenting.

Prosecution lawyers urged Guzman to put Pinochet under house arrest, but there has been no indication what the judge would do after the 85-year-old former ruler defied his order.

Pinochet on Sunday remained in Los Boldos, his heavily guarded countryside house in Bucalemu, 130 km southwest of the capital.

PINOCHET

Pinochet was briefly seen early Sunday afternoon as he entered a private chapel next to his house to attend Mass. Accompanied by his wife, Lucia Hiriart, and several friends, Pinochet walked with difficulty using a cane and was helped by bodyguards.

Guzman had ordered two days of neurological and mental tests to start Sunday and legal questioning on Tuesday—a step widely expected to be followed by the reinstatement of Pinochet's indictment on homicide and kidnapping charges.

Guzman last month indicted Pinochet as responsible for the atrocities committed by the so-called "Caravan of Death," a military party that executed 57 political prisoners shortly after the 1973 coup led by Pinochet. The indictment, however, was overturned by the Supreme Court because Guzman failed to question Pinochet first. *AP*

Solon: Bush pardon for Clinton to end scandals of 8 years

WASHINGTON—President-elect George W. Bush should pardon President Bill Clinton, whether indicted or not, to put the scandals of the last eight years behind the nation, says the Republican head of the Senate committee that oversees the federal criminal justice system.

The independent counsel investigating Clinton's conduct in the Monica Lewinsky matter has said a decision about whether to pursue the case against Clinton will come "very shortly" after he leaves office Jan. 20.

"I would pardon him," Sen. Orrin Hatch, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, replied when asked on "Fox News Sunday" if he would do so whether Clinton was indicted or not.

"I think it's time to put this to bed. It's time to let President Clinton fade into whatever he's going to fade into, and I just don't see keeping it alive any longer, and I don't think there's a jury in America that is going to convict President Clinton," Hatch said.

"I can't tell President-elect Bush what to do and he has every reason not to do that, but I think it would end a problem in America that needs to be ended," he added.

On CNN's "Late Edition," Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, said, "I don't know what he would be pardoning him for, unless the independent counsel brings up charges."

A Bush spokesperson did not return a call seeking comment.

But on Dec. 19, spokesperson Ari Fleischer said the president-elect had noted reports quoting administration officials that Clinton would not seek a pardon from the new president. "We take him at his word," Fleischer added. *AP*

Refugees die in subzero weather

ISLAMABAD—Subzero temperatures are killing some of the 18,000 newest Afghan refugees to Pakistan, many of whom have nothing but plastic sheets and pieces of old clothes to cover themselves, Yousuf Hasan, a United Nations official said Monday.

"On Saturday I saw myself a three-month old baby died," said Hasan, of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office in Pakistan.

"They are living out in the open. The conditions are appalling. Some of them are wrapping themselves in plastic sheets and in bits and pieces of old clothes to try to keep warm," he said.

Some aid groups have opened clinics in the area, but the conditions are horrific, he said.

Temperatures in northwestern Pakistan where the new refugees are living, have been dropping to below freezing at night.

According to the Urdu-language newspaper, The Jang, seven people died last weekend in a makeshift camp on the outskirts of Jalozai in northwestern Pakistan.

"The people are coming from a long way and by the time they reach Pakistan they are already in desperate conditions, weak and tired," explained Hasan, who did a head count on Saturday of the latest influx of refugees to northwestern Pakistan.

Hasan said the United Nations counted 18,000 new Afghan refugees, who have slipped across Pakistan's porous border despite a ban on new refugees by the Pakistan government.

In November the Pakistani authorities closed its borders to new refugees after 31,000 desperate Afghans swarmed into the country, itself a poor nation of 140 million people.

The United Nations raised more than $1 million in emergency aid for the new arrivals, but Pakistan worried about the long-term impact of a new flood of refugees in a poor country already hosting one of the world's largest refugee population.

In camps in Pakistan's northwest frontier province there are about 1.2 million Afghan refugees already in residence. In the cities and towns throughout Pakistan there are another one million refugees camped and working, say government and aid agencies. *AP*

Bloodshed continues in Aceh

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—As Indonesian government and rebel negotiators prepared to meet in Switzerland Monday for another round of peace talks, bloodshed continued in Aceh province and both sides warned of the possibility of all-out civil war.

A six-month-old ceasefire agreement expires on Jan. 15 and both sides have said that there is little hope of extending it. The truce has had little effect, with fighting intensifying during the past several months.

Indonesian Defense Minister Mohammad Mahfud was quoted by The Jakarta Post newspaper as saying he was pessimistic about the outcome of the talks. Negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland, originally were to have started in December but were rescheduled because they would have coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadhan.

Rebel Free Aceh Movement commander Abu Arafah said his forces had consolidated their positions and were "ready for war" if the ceasefire is not extended.

Over the weekend, police shot three villagers to death during a security crackdown in eastern Aceh, said Teukeu Fadil, a local human rights worker. He said another two people were found dead on the outskirts of the provincial capital Banda Aceh.

Police also said officers shot two suspected rebels to death in Pidie town. *AP*

Japanese youth celebrate transition into adulthood

TOKYO—Thousands of Japanese 20-year-olds in suits and brightly colored kimonos crowded into city halls, hotel ballrooms and shrines on Monday to attend ceremonies marking their formal entry into adulthood.

The event is a national holiday here, where similar rites have been practiced since the 7th century.

An estimated 1.5 million Japanese are currently 20 years old, the traditional age marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. Many gathered at city halls and temples throughout the country for concerts and speeches by local officials.

But not all gatherings were festive.

At an event on Sunday, Iemitsu Arai, the mayor of Fukaya city, north of Tokyo, launched an angry tirade at a roomful of boisterous 20-year-olds.

Arai, frustrated by the 1,000 young men and women who refused to pay attention, cut short his speech and threw his notes at the crowd. Some were being rowdy, and a few were chatting on mobile phones, officials said.

This year's celebration comes at a time of rising discontent among the nation's youth, evidenced by a series of violent crimes that have shocked this relatively crime-free nation.

In the first six months of this year, juveniles committed a record 53 killings, almost double the 27 cases reported during the same period of the previous year, according to the National Police Agency.

Last month, two teenagers were arrested in the fatal stabbing of a taxi driver in central Japan.

Two others—a 17-year-old accused of fatally bludgeoning a woman with a hammer and a 15-year-old suspected of stabbing to death three members of a neighboring family—were sent to medical detention centers for mental illnesses.

The coming-of-age holiday also highlights a worrisome trend for Japanese policy makers: the slowing population growth rate.

Japan's population in the last five years grew at its lowest pace since the end of World War II, the government said last month, adding to fears that the nation will soon be ill equipped to care for the growing ranks of its elderly. *AP*

DONNING fancy hairdo, Japanese 20-year-olds in traditional kimono robes and fur shawls pose for a snapshot taken by a friend after a coming-of-age ceremony in downtown Tokyo, Jan. 8. An estimated 1.5 million Japanese currently at age 20 years celebrated their formal entry into adulthood. AP

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

Priest buried amid cries for peace

DATU ODIN, Sinsuat–As the white casket containing the remains of murdered Fr. Benjamin Inocencio was lowered at 10:46 a.m. yesterday at the Oblates Cemetery here, his sister sprinkled soil from his birthplace in Ugong, Pasig.

Priests, nuns and his fellow workers from Sulu and Tawi-tawi threw in white and yellow chrysanthemums and red and white anthuriums. Father Benjie's elder brother threw in ten-peso and twenty-peso bills.

"That's all I can give my brother as a sendoff gift. That's all of my allowance from Manila," said Alfredo, 50, Father Benjie's elder brother.

Alfredo, a vegetable farmer, said his brother would often give his six children money when he visited and even sent one of them to school.

Aside from Alfredo, also present were Father Benjie's brothers Graciano, 45; Enrico, 47; and sisters Lory, 40 and Felicidad, 48.

Family members, as well as fellow priests, shed tears, quietly, in the cemetery shaded by tall African tulip trees.

Gunned down by an alleged Abu Sayyaf member on Dec. 28, Holy Innocent's Day, Father Benjie, chancellor of the Vicariate of Jolo, was laid to rest amid calls for an end to violence in Sulu.

Pope John Paul II, in his message read by Apostolic Nuncio Antonio Franco, appealed to those who resort to violence in the southern island of Sulu to stop the killings.

"The Holy Father appeals, once again, to those who resort to violence, which has already caused so much sufferings and has already taken so many innocent lives, to renounce this evil act and to cooperate in ensuring peaceful and respectable co-existence among all the peoples in the region," Franco said.

"They who refused to love in peace have taken away our brother's life with a mark of violence," Franco said.

To Father Benjamin's killers, the Apostolic Nuncio said: "Yet it is not hatred that we feel toward those who perpetrated this crime. To them, we (pray for) forgiveness and pity for their souls."

Come what may

Jolo Bishop Angelito Lampon, OMI, DD, said the mission of the Church in Jolo will continue "come what may."

"We are there, and we continue to be there as long as God gives us the courage and the will," Lampon, who took over the post of Bishop of Jolo when Benjamin de Jesus, also of the Oblates of the Mary Immaculate, was gunned down on Feb. 4, 1997.

"The murder(s) of Bishop de Jesus and Father Benjamin are the consequences (of assignment in Jolo) . . . but there is no turning back . . . we have to be there holding that little light (from) a candle of hope," Lampon said.

Fr. Federico Labaglay, superior of the OMI, said Father Benjie was "a martyr for peace."

Concelebrating Mass with Father Labaglay and Bishop Lampon were Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, OMI, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines; retired Archbishop Philip Smith, OMI, Davao; Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Kidapawan Bishop Romulo Valles and the Papal Nuncio.

Father Benjie's casket was carried to the burial site by his 13 classmate-priests in the novitiate.

About 50 of Father Benjie's parishioners from Jama-Mapun de Tawi-tawi, composed of Muslim and Christians, also attended the rites.

Father Benjie would have turned 43 on Jan. 17. *Edwin Fernandez with a report from Carolyn Arguillas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

TONY MACASINAG

TROPHY

A snake that could have terrorized residents of a village in Legazpi City ends up being the terrorized one as a group of men and boys hold the animal up like athletes would do to trophies.

FILING OF CANDIDACIES

Start of poll fever stops traffic in Cotabato City

COTABATO CITY—Traffic stood at a standstill here for nearly three hours yesterday when candidates, accompanied by hundreds of their supporters, trooped to the Commission on Elections office to file their certificates of candidacy.

Administration candidates of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) and the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) arrived as early birds with truckloads of supporters. They were followed by candidates of the Lakas NUCD-UMDP-Islamic Party of the Philippines (IPP).

The presence of political supporters outside the Comelec office on Curcuera Street here congested most of the city's 10 major thoroughfares for nearly three hours.

Dats Piang, reporter of radio station dxRD, said traffic along the streets of Sinsuat, Jose Lim, Don Rufino Alonzo, SK Pendatun, Makakua, Roman Vilo and Shariff Kabunsuan in the wharf area "seemed to have halted" as candidates, supporters and armed security forces aboard cars and vans came in a convoy.

At the Maguindanao Comelec office, gubernatorial challenger Andal Ampatuan, vice mayor of Shariff Aguak town, and incumbent Gov. Zacaria Candao, together with their respective party candidates, sat face-to-face as they filed their certificates of candidacy almost simultaneously.

Political observers said the provincial elections would be a stiff competition between Ampatuan and Candao and their running mates Bimbo Sinsuat and Norodin Matalam.

Matalam's elder brother, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Vice Gov. Guimid Matalam, is running for congressman in Maguindanao's second district with the Ampatuan-Sinsuat tandem.

Ampatuan's uncle, former Comelec Commissioner Japal Guiani, is also running against Guimid under the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP and the IPP of the Candao-Matalam team.

Comelec records show that most of those who filed their certificates of candidacy are scions of known political families in Maguindanao, including Zainodin Abutazil, Alex Tomawis, Sultan Abas Pendatun, Ronie Sinsuat, Allan Aratuc, Freddie Mangudadatu, Akmad Ampatuan and Zacaria Sangki, among others.

Maguindanao provincial elections officer in charge Kasan Usi said the voting population in the province has increased during the registration last Dec. 28-29.

Outgoing elections supervisor Suharto Ambolodto said Maguindanao used to have 335,651 registered voters as of 1999.

But Usi said municipal election officers would have to convene as a Board of Elections Registration on Jan. 10 to determine whether or not the commission would approve the new listing by the end of the month.

The Comelec has set the deadline on Jan. 14 for the filing of certificates of candidacies in the ARMM, which is earlier than those in other parts of the country.

In 1996, Congress enacted Republic Act 8046, which provides for the automation of ballot counting in the ARMM as a pilot area for the Comelec's planned shift to computerized elections.

R.A. 8436 was subsequently passed to amend the law, providing for computerized national and local elections in every province starting this year. *Nash Maulana with reports from Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Arrested Negros NPA leader faces murder, gun charges

BACOLOD CITY—Multiple murder and frustrated murder charges are being readied against an alleged leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army on Negros Island for the ambush-slaying of 17 soldiers in Himamaylan in August.

Col. Alphonsos Crucero, 303rd Brigade Commander, said they would file an amended complaint before the local court against Jessie Lipura.

As commander of rebel forces on the island, Crucero said, Lipura has command responsibility for the ambush that led to the most casualties among soldiers in the history of the communist insurgency on Negros Island.

Lipura is said to be the deputy secretary of the Negros Island Regional Party Committee and is next in line to Frank Fernandez, a priest-turned-rebel who now heads the CPP-NPA on the island. He is also allegedly the commanding officer of the Security Defense Group of the NPA's Negros Island Committee.

Aside from these cases, Lipura would also be charged with illegal possession of firearms after a .45 cal. pistol was found in his possession during his arrest on Jan. 5.

Crucero said they were still determining if the five persons who were arrested with Lipura would be included in the amended multiple murder and frustrated murder complaint.

Lipura and five others were arrested at 2:30 p.m. in Barangay Taloc, Bago City by a team of police and military operatives after a brief chase from Bacolod.

Also arrested were Medardaro Sayosa, Charlito Abueva, Emmanuel Hernaiz, Frederick Oyos and Merpe Abuzo, who were tagged as NPA members.

But human rights groups questioned the arrest. They said Lipura and his companions were implicated in the ambush to justify their "illegal arrest."

Nilo Sorbito, legal counsel of the six, said he would file a petition for *habeas corpus* to force the police and the military to produce Lipura and his companions.

Seventeen soldiers were killed and seven were wounded when at least 30 NPA guerrillas waylaid them in Sitio Bulod, Barangay Carabalan, in Himamaylan town, 70 kilometers south of Bacolod.

The soldiers belonged to a composite team of the 303rd Infantry Brigade and the 11th and 61st Infantry Battalions and were on their way to reinforce their comrades in nearby Sitio Kumalang.

Fernandez owned up the ambush. The military later filed murder and frustrated murder charges against Fernandez and 29 unidentified persons before the Himamaylan RTC.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Pampanga PNP denies fund lack

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Finance authorities in Camp Olivas dispelled suspicions that retirement benefits were being slashed enormously, explaining that the Department of Budget and Management was simply releasing the amount not in full but in installments.

The suspicions were aired Wednesday to the INQUIRER by some police retirees.

Supt. Cristino Campanilla, finance comptrollership division chief, showed a DBM report on fund releases for Republic Act 8551 or the early retirement program that the police personnel have availed themselves of.

The report, dated Dec. 15, showed that the DBM released P494,283,922 in three installments on April 17, Sept. 11 and Nov. 13 last year.

The P494 million was 80 percent of the total early retirement claims of 962 policemen in the country, the report said.

The balance of P121.616 million remained unpaid to date, Campanilla said.

In Central Luzon, 34 policemen, who have reached the age of 56 years old, have sought terminal leaves worth P17.750 million.

At least 74 other retirees were seeking lump sums worth P28.971 million, Camp Olivas records showed.

In most of these claims, only partial payments were made. The rest of the claims were pending with the DBM, Campanilla said.

The lump sum fund requirement may be funded out of the 2001 budget in line with an April 4, 2000 DBM order, it was learned.

Campanilla assured there were "no irregularities," adding that this was "simply a case where we missed to inform them that the DBM has been releasing the retirement funds on a piecemeal basis."

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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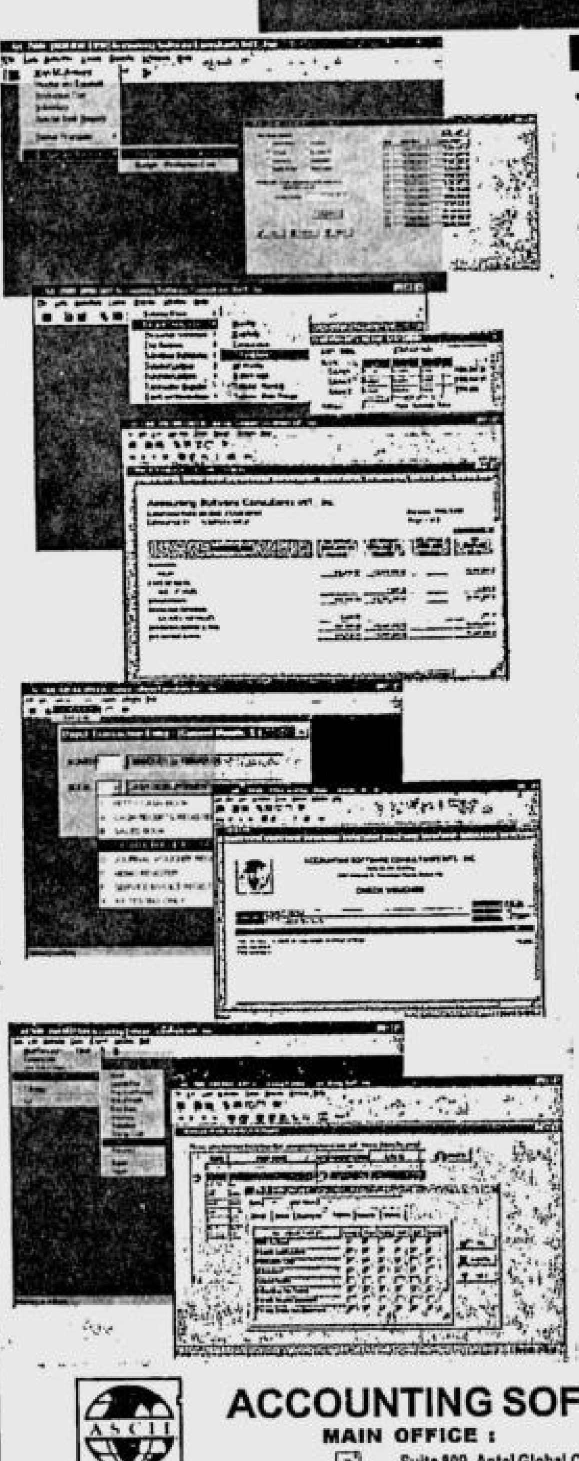

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2 Marines slain in Batangas encounter

NASUGBU, Batangas—Two Philippine Marines were slain and a soldier and a policeman were wounded in a 30-minute firefight with the New People's Army in Sitio Nangkaan, Barangay Mataas na Pulo at noon on Sunday.

A report given to the Batangas provincial police command in Batangas City yesterday identified the slain Marines as Pfc. Marlon Tesioner and Pfc. Antonio Ganzon, both of the 401st Infantry Battalion based in Camp Razon, Barangay Palico here.

Wounded were Sgt. Louie Balandor and PO2 John Diego Abrian. Both were rushed to the AFP Medical Center after the encounter.

The report also said two men believed to be NPA guerrillas were slain in the encounter. They were identified as Delfin Calimag, 57, and his son Crisanto, 22, a student, both of Barangay Mataas na Pulo.

The two suffered multiple bullet wounds and died inside their bunker, said Supt. Florante Baguio, PNP provincial director.

Supt. Carlos de Sagun, Nasugbu police chief, said several NPA rebels could have also been wounded in the encounter as traces of blood were found in their escape route.

The rebel groups, said De Sagun, were armed with an M-60 machine gun, M-16 and M-14 rifles when they retreated to the forested area of Sitio Nangkaan.

The rebel group reportedly took with them an M-14 rifle from one of the slain soldiers.

The corpses of the two NPA rebels were taken to the St. Francis Funeral Homes and were autopsied by Dr. Basilia Turno, the municipal health officer.

De Sagun said the encounter took place while the newly assigned members of the 401st IB were on a test mission in the area, a known NPA lair in this town.

The soldiers apparently stumbled upon a heavily armed fortress of the rebel group which prompted the firefight.

Joint Marine and PNP forces are still conducting mopping-up operations in Barangay Mataas na Pulo and its nearby barangays to flush out the remaining members of the NPA who might still be holding out in their camps.

Communist guerrillas had refused to declare a ceasefire during the holidays and were given orders to step up their attacks on government targets.

A series of attacks was launched by the rebels during the holidays, including ambushes on government troopers, burning of buses and assassinations. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

More workers losing jobs in Negros

BACOLOD CITY—The unemployment rate in Negros Occidental increased by 21.4 percent last year and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) office here said the worst is yet to come.

But Ricardo Monegro, DOLE head here, warned that the unemployment figure was expected to rise in the first quarter this year as investors continue to keep off the Philippines because of perceived political instability in the country.

DOLE records showed that the number of unemployed workers increased by 798 or 21.4 percent compared to 1999 although fewer companies closed last year.

Figures showed that 115 firms closed last year, displacing 3,730 workers. In 1999, only 2,932 persons lost their jobs following the closure of 138 companies.

DOLE records also showed that the number of employees who were retrenched went up by 16 percent or from 2,572 in 1999 to 3,051 last year.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

'TIT FOR TAT'

Rebel faction claims killing NPA man

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga—The communist group Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB) on Sunday admitted killing a New People's Army intelligence officer on Friday to exact "revolutionary justice" for the murder of the RHB's chief military officer last Dec. 2.

In a statement sent to reporters here on Sunday, Ka Den, who identified himself as spokesperson of the RHB Pampanga Command, said the death penalty was meted out to Eric "Ricky" Canlas, also known as Ka Mercy, at about 6:30 p.m. in Barangay San Antonio in Mexico on Friday.

The RHB's Bartolome Quizon Command, the unit named after the slain RHB chief military commander, executed Canlas, Ka Den said in the statement.

Reporters in Pampanga tried but failed to get comments from the NPA or their contacts regarding the execution as claimed by the RHB.

Ka Den claimed that Canlas acted as the lead intelligence officer of the NPA unit that "treacherously killed" Quizon while he was on a rare home visit in Barangay San Lorenzo also in Mexico.

Supt. Ismael Rafanan, Pampanga police director, confirmed the killing of Canlas, 23, on Jan. 5.

But Rafanan said their records neither identified Canlas as an NPA member nor identified the suspects in the murder.

Police recovered three shells of .45 cal. bullets from the crime scene in Barangay San Antonio.

Reports said Canlas was with a woman companion when he was gunned down. But the police had no information on whether or not the woman was hurt in the attack.

The RHB, in the same statement, also admitted killing Jesse Bagtas and Noel de la Cruz, both Mexico residents, last Dec. 18 in retaliation for Quizon's execution.

The provincial police earlier confirmed the reported killings but their records did not show that Bagtas and De la Cruz were NPA sympathizers as claimed by the RHB.

"The two were CPP-NPA cultists who actively participated in the surveillance operations against Ka JoeBay (Quizon's *nom de guerre*)," he said.

The human rights group Karapatan condemned the killings of Bagtas and De la Cruz, saying they were not rebels but farmers who were members of the Aguman da reng Maglalautang Capampangan.

Quizon's killing, which the NPA owned last month, was part of what the police and military said was the rival groups' "competition for mass base support."

Former top cadres of the Central Luzon committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines bolted the CPP and formed the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines (MLPP) and the RHB in late 1997 due to "irreconcilable disagreements" over strategies and tactics in establishing a Marxist state in the country.

The rivalry has heightened tension between the two communist groups last year.

The CPP-NPA has accused the MLPP-RHB of collaborating with the government and serving as a private army to local gambling lords and politicians. The MLPP-RHB, on the other hand, has branded its rival as "counter-revolutionary, terrorist(s) and cult(ists)."

The police and the military have warned of new killings by the CPP-NPA under what it called "Oplan Linis," a liquidation plot discovered among anti-government documents seized during encounters.

The police alleged that the targets of the liquidation plot are government forces and political and ideological enemies of the CPP. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

MAJOR Gen. Melchor Rosales (extreme left), outgoing Philippine Military Academy chief, turns over the reins of the military school to his successor, Major Gen. Manuel Carranza, as Gen. Angelo Reyes (middle), AFP chief, announces that part of the military's functions is crime-fighting. ROGER MARGALLO

AFP chief says fighting crime now part of military functions

PORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Gen. Angelo Reyes, Armed Forces chief of staff, said on Saturday crime fighting had been added to the growing functions of the military. He made the statement as he defended the military's investigation of the Dec. 30 bombings in Metro Manila where at least 18 people were killed.

But the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (RAM) said Reyes would have to take into account the "deteriorated quality of military and police intelligence," operations before the AFP can even deal with organized crime.

Reyes asserted the military's new role during the turnover ceremonies of the Philippine Military Academy's leadership.

Newly retired Maj. Gen. Melchor Rosales formally relinquished his post to Air Force Maj. Gen. Manuel Carranza in ceremonies attended by members of PMA Classes 1968 and 1969. Rosales is a member of Class 1968 while Carranza is a member of Class 1969.

Among those present in the ceremonies were retired Senior Supt. Reynaldo Berroya; Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos, former PMA superintendent and now AFP deputy chief of staff; and cashiered Col. Proceso Maligalig, RAM spokesman. All three are members of Class 1969.

Top military critics of President Estrada said Reyes was manifesting the government's too much reliance on a "defective" espionage network that compelled the mistaken arrest of 14 Muslim suspects in the Dec. 30 bombings.

Maligalig said the arrests might have been essential in the course of a military and police investigation of the bomb attacks, but their impact merely damaged the government's national security agenda.

Reyes said the military had adopted functions beyond its mandate, requiring it to turn 360 degrees to tackle "poverty alleviation, rescue and relief operations, environmental protection and partly crime prevention."

Reyes' statement, which he read before PMA officers and cadets here, appeared to have been a subtle answer to accusations made by Director General Panfilo Lacson, Philippine National Police chief, that the military had stepped into PNP jurisdiction when it arrested 20 bombing suspects in a Muslim area in Quezon City.

Too much dependence on information gathered through spy networks characterized Mr. Estrada's administration, Maligalig said.

"Unfortunately, our quality of intelligence services has deteriorated over the years, despite our technological advances . . . We don't know why. Maybe it is because of lack of resources, maybe it is because of a lack of training," he added.

"Or maybe it is because (the government's counter intelligence network) is being used for different purposes. Senators and mediamen are being bugged, according to reports. Why not watch the enemies of the state instead,'' he said.

"(RAM) hopes that (the) government can soon improve intelligence services. If there are threats like bombings against civilians, then we should be able to determine and identify immediately the culprits, he pointed out."

But both Maligalig and Berroya, staunch critics of Mr. Estrada, downplayed the growing rift between Reyes and Lacson that surfaced following the arrest of the Muslim suspects.

"Military and police actions are sometimes dictated by a sense of urgency, the whole nation was, of course, alarmed.

"But let's be fair, let them (military and the police) do their thing," said Maligalig. ***Vincent Cabreza with a report from Helen Juanillas, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Ex-deputy Ombudsman not off hook yet on sex, graft charges

BY MALOU G. APALISOK
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The legal problem of former deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Arturo Mojica may not be over yet.

Lawyer Gloria Lastimosa-Dalawampu, a complainant in the sexual harassment case against Mojica, said she would contest a Court of Appeals ruling dismissing the criminal and administrative complaints against Mojica.

She vowed to go to the Supreme Court if the CA decides against her.

"I will question that (ruling) because he is no longer in office and why is it that the Court of Appeals would say that he could not be charged criminally or administratively because he is impeachable," she said.

The CA first division dismissed the complaints of sexual harassment and graft against Mojica in a ruling dated Dec. 18.

It also nullified the order of the Ombudsman's Committee on Peers to docket criminal and administrative cases against Mojica.

"The Ombudsman and the deputy Ombudsman must first be removed by way of impeachment before they may be held to answer for any wrong or (unlawful) behavior," said the CA.

The ruling cited a constitutional provision stating that the President, Vice President, members of the Supreme Court and constitutional commissions and the Ombudsman "may be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, culpable violation of the Constitution, treason, bribery, graft and corruption, other high crimes, or betrayal of public trust."

Dalawampu, however, said the Constitution provides that only the Ombudsman may be removed by impeachment.

She said she could not understand why Mojica could not be charged when he is no longer in office. Mojica retired on July 6, 2000.

Frank Chavez, former solicitor general and Mojica's legal counsel, said the CA ruling was a vindication of his client.

He also said he may file charges against Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, whom he accused of instigating the women to execute affidavits against Mojica.

"If Desierto can't be impeached, we will file appropriate charges against him. There is nothing in the Constitution that exempts the Ombudsman from civil and criminal liability arising from grave abuse of discretion," he said.

The case filed against Mojica stemmed from allegations made by 22 lawyers and graft investigators in the Office of the Ombudsman-Visayas.

They accused Mojica of sexually harassing a female subordinate; mulcting money from confidential employees; and of delaying the release of the employees' P7,200-yearend benefits.

Employees of the Ombudsman-Visayas threatened to go on mass leave if Desierto failed to investigate Mojica.

Dalawampu also claimed that Mojica had persistently asked her for a date in 1996 when she was still a provincial prosecutor.

Mojica's persistent sexual advances forced her to resign in December in 1996 and go to private practice.

Desierto formed a Committee of Peers to conduct the investigation. He also relieved Mojica and ordered him to report to the Ombudsman's main office in Manila.

Mojica defied Desierto, prompting the Ombudsman to slap Mojica with a preventive suspension order.

Mojica then sought relief from the CA and asked the court to issue a restraining order, which was subsequently granted.

From birds to people, Cebu welcomes invasion

BY IRENE SINO-CRUZ
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY--First birds, now tourists.

"If the birds can come, so could humans," said Patria Aurora Roa, Department of Tourism (DOT) director for Central Visayas.

Roa made the comment when asked for an opinion on the first-ever-chartered flight to arrive here from Russia. She was alluding to birds that migrate to Olango Island, a bird sanctuary, to escape the harsh winter in Siberia.

On Jan. 4, about 160 passengers, including children, from Novosibirsk, Siberia landed at the Mactan, Cebu International Airport (MCIA).

Another chartered flight from Krasoyanrsk, Siberia arrived at the MCIA on Friday, also carrying another 160 passengers.

Significant

The arrival of two chartered flights full of Russian tourists is significant for the Cebu tourism industry because it means the opening up of the Philippine market to the Russians, said Tourism Secretary Gemma Cruz-Araneta.

The development of a new market is in line with efforts of the present administration in support of an open skies policy on a country-by-country basis, she added.

"The Philippines would eventually become a travel hub (that could) accelerate tourism development," Araneta told reporters.

Cebu, she said, is an ideal travel hub among different destinations in the Philippines.

The province was selected as the landing site for the two chartered flights after a group of tour operators from Russia came to the Philippines for a familiarization tour, said Blue Horizons Travel and Tours president Billie Calizo.

Blue Horizons opened a link with the Russian tour operators when the travel agency joined a travel exhibit in Moscow last year.

The Russian tour operators visited several destinations in the Philippines before they chose Cebu, Calizo told reporters.

Despite bombings

Blue Horizons did not receive any cancellation despite the recent bombings in Metro Manila on Dec. 30 that killed 18 persons and wounded about a hundred others. The flights had been planned for a long time.

"Apparently, the bombings did not matter to them because they were aware of the geography. Manila is kind of very far (from Cebu)," Roa explained.

Calizo said there is a big potential among tourists in Siberia especially during the winter months.

January is the height of the winter season in Siberia with temperatures of as cold as 36 degrees below zero, she explained.

Three years ago, she said, Russians started going to Thailand, which is still their popular destination.

The Russian tourists came to spend their Christmas (Jan. 7) and New Year (Jan. 13) in Cebu, Calizo added.

1 dead as 'killer' bus strikes again

DAVAO CITY—The accident-prone Weena Bus strikes again.

A woman was killed while five others, including her husband and two children, were injured when a speeding Weena Bus smashed a motorized *trisikad* they were riding in along Acacia Street in Juna Subdivision here Sunday morning.

A *trisikad* is a bicycle fitted with a sidecar and powered by a boat engine.

In yet another accident, two persons were killed when a Rural Transit Bus hit a motorcycle at Km. 19 along the Davao-Bukidnon Highway in Tugbok District here Saturday night.

Traffic policemen here identified the fatality in the Weena bus accident as 49-year-old Conchita Mendez who was ran over by the rear tire of the Weena bus with plate number LAP 416.

Her husband, Esmeraldo, 52, and daughters Anna Mae, 14, and Angelica, 12, were thrown off some two meters away from the point of impact.

Also injured were Ricky Tibayan, 19, and *trisikad* driver Roel Langtap, 20.

The victims were on their way to the nearby Times Beach Resort while the Weena bus was bound for the company yard in Ma-a District here.

SP01 Christian Perez, police traffic investigator, said that skid marks on the road tend to show that the bus was over speeding.

Perez added that the bus stopped 19.5 meters from where it could have hit the *trisikad,* indicating that the bus was indeed speeding.

Traffic policemen detained the bus driver, Pedro Mabale, 50, a resident of Digos City, and are preparing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, multiple injuries and damage to property.

The accident happened amid ongoing deliberations by the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on whether or not it should cancel the franchise of the Weena Bus Co.

At least 38 persons were killed when Cotabato-bound Weena Bus 5518 fell into a 50-ft ravine along Km 86, Barangay Kinuskusan, Bansalan, Davao del Sur at around 8 a.m. on Dec. 25.

Edgar Violan, LTFRB administrative officer, said they expect the three-member board of the LTFRB to rule on the Weena Bus Co.'s case this week.

The LTFRB had also asked the Weena bus management to explain its side on Sunday's accident. But Violan said the board will no longer include the Sunday accident in its deliberation because the incident is a separate case.

In the Rural Transit Bus accident, police identified the victims as Leonardo Ugbinan and Ariston Culmon. Ugbinan, who drove a Yamaha motorcycle, was making a left turn along Km 19 when the speeding Rural Transit Bus hit the bike's rear, throwing off the victims.

Police immediately detained the bus driver, Ronaldo Batawsa, pending the filing of criminal charges. *Jowel Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Atong sis tried cover-up

(From page A1)

Singson had testified that he, along with Ang, delivered the money to Mr. Estrada's residence on Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan, in the last week of August 1998.

Rodenas later identified Uy as the daughter of Catalina Ang, mother of the President's friend.

Last week, prosecution witness Clarissa Ocampo testified that then Equitable PCI Bank chair George L. Go directed her last December to prepare a second set of documents transferring Jose Velarde's P500-million trust account to businessman Jaime Dichaves.

Ocampo, Equitable PCI Bank senior vice president, earlier told the court that Velarde was Mr. Estrada.

She said Dichaves signed the second set of documents on Dec. 13 in the presence of Go in the law office of defense lawyer Estelito Mendoza in Makati.

But the transfer did not push through as the President failed to send an authorization letter.

A BARRICADE of the PNP Special Action Forces secures the entrance to the Senate. MIKE ALQUINTO

Uproar

Later at the trial, a cook took center stage, causing uproar in the impeachment court.

A woman claiming to be the real Delia Rajas told the court that she was not the Delia Rajas who Rodenas said was one of the three people who opened accounts through which the alleged tobacco tax kickbacks for the President were coursed.

The Rajas whom the defense panel presented said that she was a cook employed by Ang's mother Catalina.

The drama began when defense lawyer Sigfried Fortun asked that Rodenas identify Rajas from the spectators' gallery.

Fortun noted during his cross-examination of Rodenas that she was able to identify "Delia Rajas" through photos in identification cards shown to the bank when she opened an account two years ago.

These included employment IDs issued by ET Enterprises Inc. and Solid Builders Center, two companies said to be owned by Ang.

Fortun asked Rodenas if she would be able to identify Rajas again. The witness replied she would if Rajas had not altered her physical appearance since their last meeting.

"As long as she still has short hair and if her build is still the same," Rodenas said in Filipino.

Rodenas spent more than 20 minutes scouring the Senate gallery in a futile search for someone she was not meant to recognize in the first place.

Dirty trick

Opposition senators accused the defense of playing a "dirty trick" on the court after Rodenas failed to identify Rajas, who turned out to be different from the one she said she saw open an account with the Landbank branch on Shaw Boulevard. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Earlier, senator-judges from the opposition, including Raul Roco, Loren Legarda and Renato Cayetano, expressed apprehension at Fortun's suggestion.

Fortun assured Legarda that Rajas was present in the gallery.

However, the lawyer did not inform the court that the woman who was invited by the defense panel was not the same Delia Rajas who signed the Landbank specimen cards in the presence of Rodenas when she opened an account.

The prosecution panel acquired a copy of Rajas' membership card at the Social Security System and presented this among its pieces of evidence.

Fortun apparently saw the opportunity to use the SSS document against the prosecution when he realized that it referred to a different Delia Rajas.

Before agreeing to the search, Senator-Judge Juan Flavier asked that all doors of the Senate session hall be locked so no one could leave or sneak in while Rodenas conducted her search.

Senator-Judge Rodolfo Biazon demanded that all persons present should not switch seats.

Senator-Judge Juan Ponce Enrile then called for a short break for a quick trip to the wash room.

"I'm not Delia Rajas but I need to go out for a while (because of a) liquidity problem," he explained.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide, the presiding officer, allowed Rodenas to scour the left and right galleries of the Senate session hall to look for Rajas.

Failing to find the Rajas she knew, Rodenas returned to her seat.

Boos

Curiosity finally got the better of the senator-judges who demanded that Fortun produce Rajas.

"We do not intend to present Delia Rajas," Fortun stressed. Loud boos from the gallery followed.

Senator-Judge Renato Cayetano noted he had witnessed many court dramas where witnesses were made to identify suspects in open court.

"The person is produced to assure the judge that that person exists," he said.

Biazon accused Fortun of pulling a dirty trick because of his refusal to present Rajas.

"I would manifest on the floor that a dirty trick was played in this court. What if the witness, in a moment of panic, just pointed to anyone only to find out later that there is no Ms Rajas in this gallery at all?" he said.

Senator-Judge Franklin Drilon accused Fortun of not following "a fair process."

Fortun told the court that when prosecutors presented evidence to establish the existence of Delia Rajas, they presented the IDs shown to Landbank along with the SSS membership record.

He said the prosecution panel's theory about Rajas' identity was incorrect since the Rajas who opened the account was different from the Rajas in the SSS records.

Rodenas, however, clarified that she identified Rajas through the IDs presented to the bank when she opened the account.

House Prosecutor Oscar Moreno said it was not Rodenas, but another witness last Friday who identified Rajas through SSS records.

The threat of disciplinary action from senator-judges forced Fortun to call Rajas, a cook of Ang's mother Catalina, from the right gallery.

Bespectacled widow

Rajas, a bespectacled widow of 35, was made to take the witness stand.

She told the court that Fortun's brother, Raymond Parsifal Fortun, approached her on Sunday night and convinced her "to tell the truth" that she was not the Delia Rajas who withdrew money from Landbank.

Rajas said Mrs. Ang was the one who contacted Raymond Fortun before their meeting.

But Rajas could not explain the circumstances of her presence in the Senate yesterday.

All she knew, she said, was that she was escorted to the Senate session hall by two women assigned by Fortun.

Rodenas also testified that Alfaro represented the mother of Ang whenever she sent telegraphic transfer transactions through the bank to different provinces.

The testimony came after Drilon asked Rodenas who Alfaro was representing when she made the telegraphic transfers.

"It was Catalina Ang, your honor," Rodenas said in Filipino. *With report from Martin P. Marfil and AFP*

Defense lawyer faces sanction for 'dirty trick'

(From page A1)

her out.

What Fortun did not tell the court was that the Rajas present in court was not the depositor whom Rodenas met at the bank. *(See story on Page A1.)*

As anticipated by the defense panel, Rodenas failed to identify the Delia Rajas who was in the spectators gallery.

Fortun's challenge, he later explained, was meant to show that the Rajas which Rodenas met at the bank is not the same as the Delia Rajas, a cook, employed by the mother of Charlie "Atong" Ang, a close friend of the President.

Senator-Judge Franklin Drilon said he would move to cite Fortun for contempt if the transcript of the proceedings proves that he tried to make misrepresentations.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the transcripts would be available early this morning to enable any senator to move for a citation during the trial this afternoon.

Senator-Judge Raul Roco insisted on imposing sanctions on Fortun, who he said could have resorted to a "dirty trial tactic."

"I am just trying to clarify what was foisted upon us, knowing full well that there was no such person who could have been identified." Roco said.

Flamboyant

Santiago, who had been under fire from anti-Estrada factions for her alleged bias for the defense did not like Fortun's method.

"I must say together with the rest of our observers that I was struck by your conduct which, to put it at its kindest, was unconventional, to say the least, and flamboyant. Perhaps in the future it would be better for counsel to introduce evidence in conventional and an expected way," Santiago said.

Only Senator-Judge Juan Ponce Enrile went to Fortun's defense, asking Roco if he was accusing Fortun of unethical conduct and asking him to specify.

Roco said Fortun should conduct himself in the court with candor as all lawyers are bound to do.

"Then charge him before the proper forum, not here," Enrile snapped.

"We could settle it among ourselves . . . I don't want to leave this court feeling that counsel has been lacking in candor," Roco said.

Misleading

When Fortun refused to present his Rajas, Pimentel warned the lawyer about possible sanctions "for misleading the members of this tribunal."

"You owe it to this court to identify this person, to show that Ms Rajas is actually in this court," Pimentel lashed out at Fortun before his presentation of his Rajas.

Roco blasted Fortun for allegedly making the impeachment court believed "that it is this same person who opened the account" at the Landbank.

"Now, they are saying now, 'No, this is not the same person.' That means it was just a trick of mirrors! They (defense lawyers) asserted it is this same person who opened the account. Now they are saying it is not, so it really misled the poor witness. That's terrible, that is contempt of this court," Roco fumed.

"We made very clear the premise of our question," Fortun insisted.

"No, no, no, no, counsel. Attorney Fortun, this one was a dirty trick." Roco stressed.

"It was clear from your representation that this same person sitting in the gallery was the same person who opened the account. Then there was no use for this exercise," he added.

"I asked witness if she will be able to recall Delia Rajas," Fortun started to explain but Roco cut him short.

"Under our code of responsibility, as an officer of this court, you owe us candor," Roco said.

"I am willing to present the witness now," Fortun answered.

"But it is pointless," Roco lashed back.

Why Fortun did it

Fortun said his challenge was prompted by documents submitted by the prosecution panel which included, aside from the employment IDs allegedly presented by Rajas at the bank, her file record with the Social Security System.

Fortun was unapologetic, saying he was merely trying to test Rodenas' credibility if she could identify Rajas

"We wanted to test her credibility if she knows the person who sat in front of her to sign Delia Rajas . the truth is that the real Delia Rajas is here. We asked is if she can identify the real Delia Rajas. She was not able to evaluate the truth as it is turning out that she cannot identify the real Delia Rajas." Fortun explained.

Senate threatens to ban protests

THE SENATE threatened to ban protests outside its building after an employee was beaten up yesterday by demonstrators.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said "some ruffians tried to forcibly enter" the building, triggering the violence in which a driver-employee was punched and harassed by the crowd.

"The Senate may be compelled to consider placing restrictions on the right of demonstrators to hold rallies near the Senate building." Pimentel said.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide, the tribunal's presiding officer, said the noise coming from the protesters "had been disrupting the proceedings."

Some 100 members of militant groups Bayan Muna, NUSP, Gabriela, Anakbayan, Kilusang Mayo Uno and the Estrada Resign Movement had appeared at the Senate grounds just before 3 p.m.

Waving banners and placards and shouting anti-Estrada slogans, the groups were protesting "the expulsion from the hearings of three spectators by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago last week. We want to prove the people won't allow this kind of attitude," said Teddy Casiño of Bayan.

Just before 5 p.m. a Senate shuttle bus driven by Mohamed Adam, 39, tried to make its way through the crowd.

When Adam refused to back up the bus, Casiño grabbed its keys while Adam pulled out an ice pick and a lead pipe to confront him.

Protesters started pelting the bus and Adam with mineral water bottles and other missiles.

After 15 minutes, Adam was escorted by Senate security personnel into the building. His lip was bloodied. No one else was reported injured.

"The bus was being used to break up the rally. We tried to settle the matter peacefully but he pulled out the ice pick. We didn't expect this to happen. The driver should explain his actions," said Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna. *Reports from Alcuin Papa, Leonida Marie Palacios and AFP*

Maceda: Laarni, Guia good in business

(From page A1)

have more money than Dr. Ejercito, Maceda said in an interview with radio station dzMM.

The First Lady and her children, however, are known to have interests in real estate, food and entertainment companies, including JELP, a property firm.

Gomez has business interests in at least 33 corporations, while Enriquez has formed at least six companies, according to official records cited in a report by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Gomez's core businesses, the report said, appear to be in the fields of real estate and trading. She owns at least seven real estate firms, with a combined capitalization of over P200 million, the center said. She is also active in the labor recruitment business, with four job placement companies.

Recruitment business

"Before Mr. Estrada became President . . . the recruitment of laborers was strong in Taiwan," Maceda said, referring to Gomez's recruitment business.

But Rep. Sergio Apostol, echoing Arroyo, noted that the amounts in Enriquez's and Gomez's accounts were not included in Mr. Estrada's statement of assets and liabilities.

He said that their wealth should have been included in the statement because he has openly admitted supporting his mistresses' families.

Prosecutor Oscar Moreno said documents pertaining to the women's accounts could form part of the prosecution's case this week.

Loi's account

On Friday, the prosecution came out with documents showing that the First Lady received from Singson the two checks totaling P8.4 million on Oct. 4, 1999.

The prosecution last night introduced as evidence one check for P8 million deposited into Dr. Ejercito's personal account in Citibank Greenhills, San Juan.

Victor Lim, Citibank vice president, testified that the P8 million check was deposited on Oct. 6 and processed at 4:40 p.m., outside the bank's regular banking hours. Lim is scheduled to continue his testimony this afternoon.

Also admitted as evidence yesterday was another check for P46.3 million issued by Singson to William Gatchalian on Aug. 20, 1999.

Charity

Dr. Ejercito denies receiving any money from Singson.

Maceda said yesterday that the money could have been given to the First Lady for her office's charity programs.

"I'm almost sure that that is a donation. You know Loi, she would be the last person to get involved in anything like that," he added.

"From the way I see it, Dr. Loi is known to have many (charity) projects," he said. "Precisely because the First Lady is steeped in charity work," she would have less money than Enriquez and Gomez, Maceda concluded.

He also tried to explain that Singson might have issued the checks to cash to pay off a debt to a "mutual friend" of his and the First Lady's. "That friend could have donated the money to Loi for some charity projects," Maceda speculated.

He also contended that if Dr. Ejercito did in fact receive jueteng money from Singson, the transaction would have appeared in a ledger where the governor kept a record of such payoffs.

"How can that be called jueteng money?" Maceda asked. "It did not even appear in the list (of recipients of payoffs) and Singson was writing down everything, down to the last cent, including tax."

Crucial

Moreno said the P8.4-million checks were crucial to prove that Mr. Estrada received money from Singson.

"What is important is that (these checks) issued by Singson and given to Estrada as part of jueteng protection money eventually ended up in the bank account of the First Lady Luisa Ejercito," Moreno said.

"Once these checks, however, are presented, it will be our obligation," to link them to the charges, Chief Prosecutor Feliciano Belmonte admitted before yesterday's trial session.

Records of the Citibank branch in Greenhills showed that the First Lady had a book balance of P11.89 million and an available balance of P3.49 million as of Oct. 4, 1999.

Moreno claimed the checks were supposed to be given to Mr. Estrada through the President's personal auditor but somehow found their way to his wife's account.

Mr. Estrada's lawyers have maintained that the checks in the First Lady's account were immaterial to any of the Articles of Impeachment and should not be brought up in court.

"Unexplained wealth" is part of the second Article of Impeachment (graft and corrupt practices) against the President.

Can't be compelled

When asked if prosecutors planned to call the First Lady to the witness stand, Moreno said: "We think it's not yet necessary."

If the First Lady cannot be compelled to testify, President Estrada's mistresses could be summoned to take the witness stand, Apostol said.

Speaking at a press forum at the Manila Hotel, Apostol said that Dr. Ejercito could not be forced to testify against her husband because the country's laws prohibit spouses from testifying against each other.

The laws, however, do not apply to Mr. Estrada's mistresses, he said. Asked if the prosecution would consider calling them to the stand, he said: "We're studying the matter."

The prosecution panel has leaned first one way and then the other on the matter of summoning the President's longtime companions as hostile witnesses in his impeachment trial.

Acting Press Secretary Michael Toledo said that it was up to the President's lawyers to decide whether the First Lady would testify. "She's willing, but this will depend on the advice of counsel," he said.

Toledo said Arroyo's latest revelation is a "clear indication that the prosecution has no leg to stand on."

He said the disclosure was probably "part of the campaign to discredit the institution of the presidency (and) to embarrass the President and his First Family."

Women's groups

Party list group Bayan Muna yesterday challenged the First Lady and the President's "extended families" to come out into the open and declare their assets and liabilities.

In a statement, Liza Masa, Gabriela secretary general and Bayan Muna party list nominee, said the President's partners have a moral obligation to "explain how they acquired gigantic wealth under the Estrada administration."

At a rally in front of the Senate, Masa called Enriquez and Gomez "cronies," saying that the President "is literally sleeping with his cronies who are women that are not his wives. The mistresses and the cronies have used banks to launder ill-gotten money."

In Davao City, Gabriela yesterday dubbed Mr. Estrada's mistresses as "another class of prostituted women" for allowing themselves to be used and exploited by the President in exchange for material gains.

The group again challenged the First Lady to stop playing the part of a "martyr wife."

"As women, we sympathize with the plight of the First Lady for being a victim of a macho husband. But as a wife, isn't it her responsibility to also restrain her husband from stealing from the people?" said Lyda Canson, Gabriela-Davao City chair. *With reports from Juliet L. Javellana, Andrea Trinidad-Echavez, Alcuin Papa; Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AFP*

Delia Rajas . . .

(From page A1)

and members of the Senate security force traced Ticket No. 05831, the one used by Rajas who took the witness stand.

Rajas testified before the Senate impeachment court that she was not the Delia Rajas who opened an account with the Landbank branch on Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong and withdrew P40 million in tobacco taxes.

Senator-judge Raul Roco said the Delia Rajas controversy showed the "pattern of duplicate identities" that had marked the impeachment trial of President Estrada.

"In this particular case, we have two Eleuterio Tans with another name. We have apparently at least two Delia Rajases. We even have Jose Velarde," Roco said.

Tan was one of the three people who withdrew P130 million from Landbank while Jose Velarde, who has a P500-million trust account with Equitable PCI Bank, is believed to be the President. But businessman Jaime Dichaves said that he was Velarde.

"And the pattern of duplicate identities is what is coming out. And that is why I am concerned because if this duplication is foisted upon us consciously. That is unfair and I would like to believe that that is not the intention of defense lawyer Siegfried Fortun," he said.

Roco believed in Rajas' claim that she knew nothing about the deposit and withdrawal of the P40 million from Landbank branch on Shaw Boulevard.

"This Bicolana is telling the truth but it had nothing to do with the case," Roco said.

Rajas said she had been an employee of the Ang family for the past 10 years.

Under Drilon's questioning, Rajas said she was fetched in her house by "Ate Allan," who she identified as a sister of Charlie "Atong" Ang.

She said they rode in a vehicle, which looked like a Revo, accompanied by the two women she met for the first time.

She said it was defense lawyer Raymond Parsifal Fortun who introduced the two women to her.

Upon arriving at the Senate, she said she did not personally sign up for her pass at the public gallery.

She said her companions gave the pass to her and together they sat at the left gallery.

Senator-judge Ramon Magsaysay noted that she even used a pseudonym in getting a pass. Magsaysay said visitor's pass No. 05831 was listed under the name Belen Piamonte.

Magsaysay said the two women also used other names in getting their visitor's pass.

Rajas was part of a four-woman group that entered the Senate premises at 1:30 p.m.

Maricar Bela and Katrina Arroyo, members of the Senate security force stationed at the registration desk, said that only one member of the group—who signed her name as Frances Sapitulla with Ticket No. 05824—signed for all the four.

Two other names in the group were signed in as Bong Arboleda with Ticket No. 05829 and Sonia Rivero with Ticket No. 05828.

The four gave their address as Cityland 11, Tower I, Makati City.

The address of President Estrada's defense panel is 4th floor, Cityland 10, Tower I, Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

A check with the Senate protocol office revealed that the ticket numbers were part of 12 tickets that were assigned to the defense panel.

"All the tickets were assigned to the defense panel," said Carmen Arceno, director general of the protocol office.

Last night, Drilon asked the impeachment court to hold two women whom Delia Rajas had said fetched her.

One identified herself as Ma. Cecilia Asuncion and the other only as Caballero.

Erap impeachment verdict out by Feb. 12

(From page A1)

or-judges in a meeting presided over by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. before the resumption of the impeachment trial.

By speeding up the process that has battered the economy and set the nation on edge, the new schedule will also allow legislators in the trial to concentrate on the congressional elections in May, officials explained.

"The trial proper ends by January, so that before Feb. 12 there would already be a decision," Pimentel said.

Quezon City Rep. Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said the 11-member House prosecution panel agreed to finish presenting its case by Jan. 19.

The court's "No. 1 consideration is that these (proceedings) must be finished, including judgment, before Feb. 12, which is the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy," said Belmonte, head of the House prosecutors.

The election law states senators serving as judges in the trial as well as congressmen acting as prosecutors must resign from their posts by Feb. 12 if they decide to run in the May elections.

Defense lawyer Raul Daza said his side "would only need 10 days" after Jan. 19 to disprove the prosecution's charges of bribery, graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.

His colleague, Raymund Fortun, said the defense would only present its most important witnesses to save time, but he added their testimony would be enough to destroy the allegations against the President.

"The prosecution does not have a monopoly on surprise witnesses or bombshells," Fortun said.

10 more days

Pimentel said the prosecution had been given 10 trial days to finish its presentation on all four Articles of Impeachment by Jan. 19.

After 16 trial days since the court started hearing the case last Dec. 7, the prosecution has yet to wrap up its case on the first two impeachment articles—bribery and corruption.

Pimentel said the prosecution had only about seven more witnesses to present. The testimony of all but one these witnesses would only be brief, he said.

According to Pimentel, the prosecution would only present documentary evidence on two other impeachment articles—betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the Constitution.

He said the defense panel would be given seven trial days to present its case until Jan. 30.

Memoranda

After both sides have presented their case, the prosecution and defense panels are expected to submit memoranda to guide the senator-judges in their verdict.

"I suggested that they submit memoranda because two-thirds of the senators are non-lawyers. Even the lawyers (among us) will need some guide on the points that have been taken up and usually these are made through the presentation of memoranda," Pimentel said.

"After Jan. 31, we can give both panels three days to prepare their memoranda so that early in February we have a basis already for a decision," Pimentel said.

Senate Majority Leader Francisco Tatad, however, said the defense panel had sought closing oral arguments and written briefs by both sides.

"As far as I'm concerned, I can follow the oral arguments. I do not need written memo but it might be helpful to most of us," Tatad said

Pimentel said extending the trial beyond Feb. 12 was out of the question, but he added the court might hold sessions on Saturdays just to meet the deadline.

Davide, the impeachment court's presiding officer, earlier asked members of the prosecution and defense panels to speed up the hearing.

Crucial issue

The Senate, however, has not yet agreed on the crucial issue of how many votes are needed for conviction.

Asked if the number of votes needed to convict had been settled, Pimentel said: "If there are eight (not guilty votes), then he (President Estrada) would be acquitted."

But Tatad felt dubious about Pimentel's arithmetic.

The Constitution provides that a conviction on any of the four charges by two-thirds of the Senate membership would remove the President from office.

Two of the 24 senators have resigned, giving rise to the question on whether the number of votes required for conviction is 16 (two-thirds of 24) or 15 (two-thirds of 22).

"The issue is going to be resolved as soon as you have 15 votes convicting the respondent because there are those who believe that (when you have) 15 votes, the respondent is convicted," Tatad said.

"But supposing (you get) 15 votes (but) the chair says the respondent is acquitted because you need 16? So you go to the Supreme Court. We cannot decide that ourselves here because there are two schools of thought and since this is a constitutional issue it will have to be resolved by the Supreme Court," he added.

Barbers

Only 21 senators have been attending the trial since it began on Dec. 7. Sen. Robert Barbers has been recuperating in the United States since he underwent a throat operation there in November.

Barbers, however, had sent word to Pimentel that he would be back two days before the Senate hands down its verdict.

Pimentel said Barbers, who had not yet taken his oath as senator-judge, could participate in the voting.

"All he needs to do is take his oath, read the transcript and vote because under our rules there are no abstentions," Tatad said. *With reports by AP and AFP*

The defense bombshell that never was

From page A1)

he three people mentioned if she sees hem again.

It took a non-lawyer, Sen. Loren Legarda, who probably sensed something amiss from Fortun's smug demeanor in asking the question, to pin him down to make a categorical statement on what exactly he had in mind when he asked for the identification.

Fortun categorically stated that the Rajas who opened the subject bank account with Rodenas was the same Rajas present at yesterday's hearing.

As things turned out, the Rajas that Fortun referred to as being in the audience is not, by his own admission—contrary to his earlier reply to Leviste—the Rajas who personally appeared and opened the subject bank account.

In other words, Fortun knew beforehand that the Rajas he wanted Rodenas to identify was not in the audience and there was no way Rodenas could have picked her out from the crowd. At the outset, therefore, the identification was not meant to test Rodenas' credibility but for a purpose known only to the defense.

Lack of candor

Judging from the reaction of most of the senators, it is apparent the attempt to downgrade Rodenas' testimony failed miserably. No matter how Fortun tried to explain the rationale behind his identification move, it was obvious he was not completely candid or truthful to the impeachment court when he gave details of the personal circumstance of the Rajas present in the audience.

As correctly pointed out by Sen. Raul Roco, how can the defense test the credibility of Rodenas when the person it presented as the true Rajas is not the person concerned?

Fortun's statement that his objective in asking for the identification is to show that the persons who opened the bank accounts are fictitious persons and not employees of Charlie "Atong" Ang appears to be a mere afterthought. And worse, it only aggravated matters for the defense.

Instead of taking the heat off Ang, who Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson has repeatedly claimed to be the bagman of the President, the identification fiasco all the more strengthened Singson's testimony on the role Ang played in the remittance of part of the excise tax to the President.

With Rajas forced to take the witness stand, more information was elicited about the activities of Ang's mother and the ownership by the Ang family of companies that have been linked one way or the other with the jueteng collections that Singson claimed he undertook for the President.

Implication

The fact that a Delia Rajas withdrew money from Landbank that was sourced from the funds of Ilocos Sur, regardless of whether that particular person exists or not, and there indeed is a Delia Rajas in the employ of the Angs serve to bolster Singson's testimony on the participation of Ang in the illegal transactions.

The names mentioned in the course of Rajas' questioning by the senator-judges and Rodenas' statements about Alma Alfaro acting as the representative of Catalina Ang (mother of Atong Ang) and Yolanda Uy, sister of Ang, asking her (Rodenas) to remove all references to the name of Ang's corporation after Singson came up with his exposé add more credibility to Singson's allegation that the money that was turned over to the President was collated at the residence of Ang's mother.

The footprints of Ang, through his mother and sister and his employees, are all over the place

With the unexpected (from the point of view of the defense) turn of events, Rodenas' testimony was all the more strengthened. The ill-fated Rajas identification worked to the advantage of the prosecution rather than the defense.

The incident illustrates once more what seasoned trial lawyers swear by: if you are not sure about the answer you will get on cross-examination, do not ask it. You might find yourself in serious trouble.

Take two

Although questions about Rajas' participation in the bank withdrawals have been terminated, the problems of Fortun are just starting. Today, the senator-judges will review the transcript of yesterday's proceedings to determine if Fortun tried to mislead the impeachment court in asking Rodenas to identify Rajas from the audience.

If the records show that he tried to foist a deception on the court, he may be cited for contempt and meted out the corresponding disciplinary action. In the course of the discussion yesterday of that issue, many of the senators had served notice that they would not take kindly to acts that tend to degrade or diminish the integrity of the court that may be committed by direct participants in the trial, the audience or other third parties.

The members of the defense team seem to be going through some hard times lately. Earlier, lawyer Estelito Mendoza found himself in hot water when Clarissa Ocampo testified that some of the acts that were meant to change the identity of the Jose Velarde account were made in his office.

Mendoza has been accused of obstruction of justice and tampering with the evidence by a group of lawyers who are poised to demand his disbarment from the Supreme Court.

Now, Fortun has to convince the impeachment court that he acted with candor and honesty when he asked Rodenas to identify the Rajas who opened the bank account in spite of the fact that he knew that that Rajas was not in the audience, contrary to what he earlier manifested before the court.

Even the act of Fortun's brother, lawyer Parcifal Fortun, in making arrangements for the attendance of Rajas at yesterday's hearing may give rise to disciplinary action depending on the results of the investigation of Rajas' two companions.

The younger Fortun may have to explain why Rajas' true name was not stated in the visitors' registry book and the circumstances that led to her appearance at yesterday's hearing.

SEC records

Overshadowed in yesterday's dramatic events was the presentation of the articles of incorporation of Prominent Consultant Group Inc., the corporation that was awarded by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. the project to operate Bingo 2-Ball.

Prominent is owned and controlled by Ang. Last week, lawyer Emily Padua of Pagcor testified that the award to Prominent of the said project was done in the ordinary course of business and in recognition of Prominent's expertise in handling lotteries.

The records from the Securities and Exchange Commission, however, show that Prominent was organized only after the award was made. In other words, it was not yet legally existent at the time of the award. It had no personality or legal authority to win any contract from the government.

Worse, Prominent's capital was too small to even equal the cash bond required for the project.

The bottom line is: The award of the project to Prominent, or in particular, to Ang, is irregular and in violation of existing laws and regulations.

Angara admits gambling has become a big problem

From page A1)

dential Management Staff) was working under the Office of the Executive Secretary."

It was during the time of President Fidel Ramos that the factionalism started, Angara said, adding that whoever headed the PMS was at loggerheads with the executive secretary.

Yesterday was Angara's first day on the job as executive secretary, with powers to, among others, streamline and restructure the Office of the President.

The political opposition continued to warn against the "dangers" and "bad implications" of Angara's powers, saying he would practically be running the government without the public accountability of a duly elected official.

Rep. Heherson Alvarez, Lakas secretary general, said Angara could become the President's "puppeteer."

"By his self-defeating maneuver, President Estrada hopes to skirt the impeachment process by putting up a straw man who will deflect charges of incompetence and moral bankruptcy. The danger is that the straw man will have real and thoroughgoing powers," said the Isabela congressman.

"If power corrupts, vast powers corrupt thoroughly," he said.

Gambling capital

Angara's statement on gambling confirmed fears earlier raised by the Catholic Church that the Estrada administration appeared to be turning the country into a gambling capital in Asia.

"We are soon going to have a policy on gambling. The time is near," he said.

According to Angara, the issue was among the "reform" recommendations earlier presented to Mr. Estrada.

He said Justice Artemio Tuquero, who had been asked to form a panel to study the matter, would soon submit his findings.

"(The panel members) have done a good (job). They held public hearings. They started with the stakeholders in gambling," he said.

Angara, who heads the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), sought reforms in the government's gambling policy last Nov. 6.

The request was presented as a condition for the LDP to remain in the ruling coalition LAMP.

Yesterday, Angara said the LDP had also sought a reform agenda, which, he said, Mr. Estrada was now starting to implement.

"We now have a code for the first time in our history, regulating the conduct of relatives and close friends of the President and other ranking government officials. We will implement this," he said.

Angara also saidMr. Estrada had been supportive of all the reforms that the LDP had sought.

"He told me to strengthen the anti-corruption campaign of the government. It is good that these instructions are laid out clearly, so there will be no misunderstanding or intrigues," he said.

Nothing wrong

Angara said there was nothing wrong with Mr. Estrada's decision to give him vast powers.

He also said there was nothing wrong in the President's allowing him supervision over the PMS by naming his former chief of staff, Ma. Celia Fernandez, as its head. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Angara said the President knew how to delegate powers because he knew his limitations. This, Angara said, was a strength in itself.

But Mr. Estrada is the final decision-maker, he said.

Angara said that by the time Mr. Estrada assumed power, the rivalry between the executive secretary and the PMS chief had been accentuated to the extent that it was hurting the Office of the President.

"The projection to the public was that in the very Office of the President, the people there could not work well with each other," he said.

He cited the intrigues between then Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora and PMS chief Lenny de Jesus.

"That is why the President told me, 'Be in charge of the PMS because this is the heart and soul of the Office of the President.'"

Angara said it was Mr. Estrada himself who wanted the intrigues in his office ended, so that the perception of disunity and incompetence would be erased.

"There really is no reason to have fiefdoms or different functions within the Office of the President. You only have one boss, so everyone should work to help the boss," he said.

Angara also denied that he would be serving as a "deodorizer" for Mr. Estrada.

"The President is really sincere in having a new mechanism to speed up the processes in Malacañang, to make it more transparent," he said.

Cincinnatus

Senate Majority Floor Leader Francisco Tatad defended the powers given to Angara, saying "that's the only formula that can work at this point."

"I believe the Cabinet has become the main workhorse of the administration," Tatad said at a press conference.

"By putting a strong Cabinet chief in the person of the executive secretary with extensive powers and responsibilities, the administration is trying to make sure that work of some consequence will be done during these days when the presidency is virtually paralyzed by political warfare."

Tatad agreed with Amando Doronila of the INQUIRER, who earlier said Angara's powers would make him a de facto prime minister.

But Tatad said he was reminded more of the farmer Cincinnatus, who was brought in to solve the crisis that once plagued Rome.

"Cincinnatus . . ran the government for as long as the crisis was in existence, and then after that he went back to the plow. So, in a manner of speaking, Angara has become a Cincinnatus to President Estrada," Tatad said.

Angara was agriculture secretary before he accepted the new post from his running mate in the 1998 elections. He also served as senator for 12 years, becoming Senate President during his last term.

"I think Angara's assumption of this position introduces some top-caliber technocracy with public accountability, and I hope his presence in that very important and sensitive post helps move the government at this very critical stage," Tatad said.

The senator said it was only right for Angara to demand in "very clear and comprehensive terms" his powers as Little President.

"That's the only way an executive secretary at this point can function with some effect. Otherwise, it's going to be just a replacement of personnel," Tatad said.

Not elected

Alvarez, a co-author of the impeachment complaint against Mr. Estrada, argued that Angara "may be supplanting an elected official."

He said Mr. Estrada "has abdicated the presidential powers vested in him, with bad implications for the office and the entire country."

Rep. Ignacio Bunye (Lakas, Muntinlupa) voiced a similar position, saying: "Angara was not even elected by the people, and is therefore not directly accountable to them."

Bunye conceded that a "technocrat" like Angara "may be able to introduce a more professional work ethic into the running of the Office of the President," but said "his appointment is a clear signal that the President is incapable of effectively governing the country."

Another Lakas member, Negros Occidental Rep. Apolinario Lozada, said Angara's new post would "spawn a power struggle and shatter the bridge that connects the Nationalist People's Coalition and the LDP, and thus hasten the downfall of the government."

Lozada also expressed doubt that "a decent and intelligent Angara" could "deodorize" Mr. Estrada's administration.

Teodoro Casiño, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said that if Angara's appointment was meant to "salvage" the Estrada administration, then it was "a useless exercise."

Casiño said the appointment was "part of a devious scheme to make the public accept" the impeachment court's acquittal of Mr. Estrada, which, he said, was "being worked out by the President's diehards." *With reports from Volt Contreras and Juliet L. Javellana*

She's not afraid of 'snake pit'

(From page A1)

"I've always considered my youth as an asset," she declared. "I think the young are more energetic, more dynamic, and they have one thing that a lot of people lose when they get older—idealism. I think you need to inject a very strong sense of idealism into this government, and that's what I will be able to do."

Lenny de Jesus, a former head of the PMS and now housing chief, and who was herself involved in the notorious intrigues in the "snake pit," said she could only wish Fernandez good luck.

"I hope she learns from the experience because she has a lot of promise, given her credentials. I hope she benefits from the difficulties of working in the Palace instead of being destroyed by it," De Jesus said.

Credentials

Fernandez brings impressive academic credentials to her new post.

She graduated summa cum laude in business economics at the University of the Philippines in 1992, and then went on to the UP College of Law.

She placed No. 1 in the 1997 bar exams with a rating of 90.025 percent.

Her high school and elementary years were spent at the Poveda Learning Center.

Fernandez's parents, Jose Javier Fernandez, 70, and Celia Fernandez, 65, are both lawyers.

Her only sibling is the famous soprano singer Andion Fernandez, who is now based in Germany.

She is a member of various honor societies, including the Pi Gamma Mu, the Phi Kappa Phi, and the Iota Tau Tau International Legal Honor Society.

Fernandez began working for then Senator Angara in 1992.

She served as his executive assistant when he was Senate president in 1992-93.

She worked with his Accra law office, where she was made an associate, starting in 1998 until June 1999.

She was named assistant corporate secretary at the Philippine National Bank, where Angara was chair, from 1998 to May 1999.

When Angara was named agriculture secretary, he took her in as his chief of staff. She was also named assistant secretary at the Department of Agriculture.

It was thus not surprising that when Angara was tapped to be executive secretary, he recommended her for the post of PMS chief.

Surprise

Fernandez did not expect that she would be working in Malacañang at this stage, and as head of the PMS, the primary agency directly responsible to the Office of the President for providing staff assistance.

She had always thought she would be in law practice.

"It was a very good surprise," she said.

But like her first government position at the agriculture department, it was an opportunity she could not turn her back on, she said. She had no second thoughts in accepting the job.

Fernandez said she just wanted to serve the people and the government to the best of her abilities.

She described her first day on the job as "very interesting and hectic."

She was actually very excited to work in Malacañang, even if it came at a time when President Estrada was facing his most trying crisis.

"I've been blessed to have this opportunity to serve in a better capacity than the position I was previously holding," she said.

"I would gladly take it on. And I'm very excited to actually work, work hard for the government and for the people," she said.

Fernandez said there was no pressure from the UP community for her not to accept the post. Her parents are also very supportive and very proud of her, she said.

Sincerity

Despite the anti-Estrada sentiments in the UP community, Fernandez said she found the President sincere in his desire to get the country moving forward.

"His heart is in the right place," she said.

And she is also looking forward to continuing work with Angara.

"I believe in Secretary Angara. I've been with him for many years now. And I'm also looking forward to working with him. I believe in his capacity as a man and as an executive secretary," she said.

De Jesus said that if Fernandez was interested, she would give pointers to her and explain the nature and structure of the work at PMS.

She would also relate to Fernandez her experience in how to make things work in the agency.

But giving Fenandez pointers on how to survive the "snake pit" is another matter.

"I just hope she has the emotional stamina, and I wish her family would have the same emotional stamina (as mine did)," De Jesus said.

But Fernandez has an advantage in Angara, De Jesus pointed out.

"Angara will protect her and make sure that no harm would come her way," De Jesus said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 9, 2001
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Heb 2:5-12**
Gospel: **Mk 1:21-28**

Jesus and his disciples went into the town of Capernaum and began to teach in the synagogue during the sabbath assemblies. The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue and he shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God." Then Jesus faced him and said with authority, "Be silent and come out of this man!" The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

All the people were astonished and they wondered, "What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey him!" And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

Commentary:

"If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal," says Paul in 1 Cor 13. Today's gospel tells us Jesus taught with authority, unlike the scribes who may have sounded like noisy gongs and clanging cymbals. Something must have been seriously amiss about their teaching. Their words must have seemed like chaff which only an idiot of a farmer would bother to sow in his field. Thought, word, and action are the same word dabar in Hebrew, maybe because it is when they contradict that people turn into liars and demagogues with empty words. At the diaconal ordination rite, the bishop says to the candidate: "Receive the Word of God whose herald you now are. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." Meaning, speak with authority!

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

JUDICIAL ETHICS—Judges to decide cases promptly—This Court has consistently impressed upon judges the need to decide cases promptly and expeditiously pursuant to Rule 3.05, Canon 3 of the Code of Judicial Conduct and Section 15 (1) and (2), Article VIII of the Constitution. This requirement is designed to prevent delay in the administration of justice because justice delayed is justice denied; and delay in the disposition of cases erodes the faith and confidence of our people, lowers its standards and brings it into disrepute. This Court has repeatedly reminded judges that failure to decide cases within the required period constitutes gross inefficiency for which the erring judge is subject to administrative sanctions. [Citations omitted.] [Justice de Leon, Jr., Sulla v. Ramos, A.M. No. MTJ-00-1319, September 27, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Barotac booters triumph

ILOILO CITY—Former national champion St. Paul School of Barotac Nuevo blanked another ex-national titlist, Sta. Barbara National Comprehensive High, 2-0, last Sunday at the Sports Complex here to clinch the Iloilo provincial crown and advance to the all-Visayas Coke Go-for-Goal under 16 football finals.

Lord Jay Lagpitan, a standout for the Philippine team in the 1999 Street Soccer World Cup in London, eluded two Sta. Barbara defenders and knocked in the first goal. Then John Cain made it 2-0 with a powerful shot in front of the goalmouth.

It was sweet revenge for the Paulinians, who dropped a similar 0-2 decision to Sta. Barbara at the start of the Iloilo competition last November in Barotac Nuevo.

"We were just lucky to score two goals early in the game," said St. Paul coach Danilo Orian. "But the boys were determined to win and, led by Jessey Diaz, repeatedly repulsed Sta. Barbara's rallies."

In the other game, Barotac Nuevo Polytechnic Institute crushed Guimbal National High, 8-1, to finish third in the series sponsored by Coca-Cola with Adidas as official ball.

Over the UP Los Baños field in Laguna, Rizal walloped Quezon, 7-3, also last Sunday to enter the all-Luzon finals.

Al Francis Habal starred for Rizal by knocking in four goals in the 12th 20th, 22nd, and 55th minutes. Erwin Francisco struck twice while John Michael Estiamba scored once to complete Rizal's production.

Phoebus Ilano, Eduard Elps and Rowell Narinay produced Quezon's goals in the 27th, 79th and 83rd minutes, respectively.

Coca-Cola vice president and Panay and Negros plant general manager Ramon Matriano, Barotac Nuevo Vice Mayor Antonio Belluga, IFA president Titus Perez and IFA secretary general Duffie Botavara graced the awarding ceremony in Iloilo.

Danding g'daughter delivers

TEENAGE Filipina rider Danielle Cojuangco won the individual title at the CSIY (Concours Saut International Youth) Young Riders Showjumping competition in Chennai, formerly Madras, India, recently.

Cojuangco, 16, was the youngest and only female among 21 finalists in the seven-nation, 21-and-under meet sanctioned by the International Equestrian Federation. She had four faults in the first round but none in the second to beat her closest rival from Australia.

It was the first international competition for Cojuangco, a Woodrose student whose parents are Mark and Kimi Cojuangco. She is the granddaughter of San Miguel Corp. chair Danding and Gretchen Cojuangco.

Cojuangco was joined by her sister Paola, 15, and Fil-British Lara Reynolds, 16, in the Philippine team. Coach Janine Santos accompanied the riders to India.

In the team event, the Philippines failed to qualify in the finals.

The participating countries were Australia, England, Singapore, Hong Kong, Iran, India, and the Philippines.

Horses were drawn by the riders in a lottery and it was the Filipinos' tough luck to pick the worst of the lot. Despite the handicap, Cojuangco overcame the odds to win in style.

The Philippine riders arrive on Malaysia Airlines Flight 702 from Kuala Lumpur at 2:50 p.m. today.

Untalan sparkles

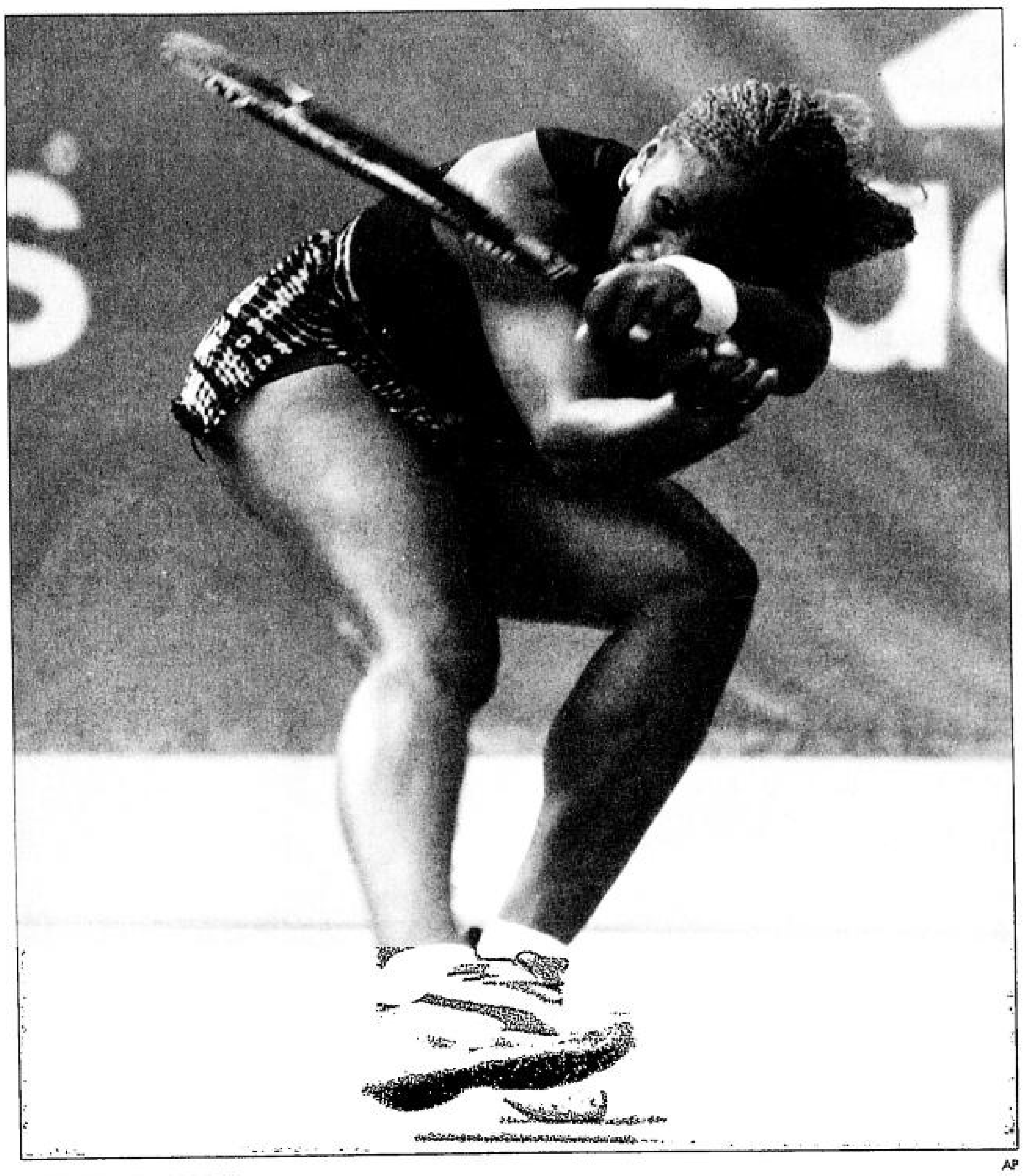
LT. COL. Greg Untalan of the Philippine Air Force annexed his sixth GMDBA Bowler of the Year title when he prevailed over all the monthly champions in this year's grand finals of the Greater Manila Duckpin Bowling Association, Inc. at the Puyat Sports Edsa-Lanes at Star Mall, Mandaluyong recently.

Untalan, who is executive assistant to PAF Commanding General Benjamin P. Defensor Jr., bagged the title at the expense of November champion Edgar Reales, 210-208.

Actually, Untalan has already earned his niche in the GMDBA Hall of Fame with his fifth triumph in last year's grand finals.

Winning in the women's division as GMDBA Bowler of the Year is February champion Arlene Rillo, a Tupperware sales supervisor.

According to tournament director Evelyn Liwanag and acting GMDBA president Eusebio Malabanan, this year's monthly champions are as follows: Jan.—Mars Nolasco/Alberto Soler; Feb.—Arlene Rillo/Tony Cuaresma; March—Lou Pangan/Fermin Dayao; April-Evelyn Rillo/Eboy Malabanan; May—Susan Dayao/Rey Mojico; June—Auring Ocampo/Tom Lariza; July—Luz Rodriguez/Greg Untalan; August—Gemma Arciaga/Leo Rodrigo; Sept.—Elena Vizcarra/Ben Fojas; Oct.—Emma Barrita/Rolly Encio; November—Lita Jardeleza/Edgar Reales; December—Joy Uy, Norma Maladaga, Beng Golfo, Alice Rosalada/Johnny Legaspi, Ronnie Bertolano, Noy Talisic and Denis Menete.



AP

SERENA'S SHOT

US star Serena Williams makes a backhand shot in her first round match against Lilia Osterlon of the USA during the Australian International Tennis Tournament in Sydney, Australia, Sunday. Williams won in straight sets, 6-3, 7-6 (8-6).

Cantada, Que head Open cast

GERARD Cantada will be back to defend his title, while reigning national amateur champion Angelo Que will shoot for a second major crown in the sixth DHL-NGAP Amateur Open golf championship scheduled Jan. 16-19 at the south course of the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

Cantada, the spearhead of the last two national teams, and Que will be facing the challenge of former national teammates and some rising names in the amateur scene in the first major amateur event of the year to be conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines in cooperation with Canlubang.

The ladies division will also be introduced starting this year.

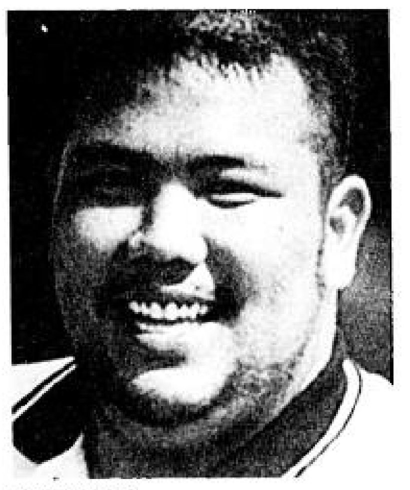
The event is open to male golfers with handicap indices of seven or lower and female golfers with indices not higher than 10.

The men's competition will be for 72 holes while women's play will be for 54 holes.

Prize at stake are trophies and gift certificates for the top three finishers. The best individual scorers daily and the top 36-hole scorers will also be given gift certificates.

Also expected to see are former national team mainstays Cookie La'O, Juvic Pagunsan and Solomon Gines, national amateur finalist Jerome Delariarte, Raymund Sangil, among others. The women's cast will be led by former national champion Carmelette Villaroman-Calimag, Lina de Guzman and Ruby Chico-Walker.

Deadline for submission for entry forms is on Jan. 3, Saturday at 5 p.m. Entry Fee is P1,500 which will include a free practice round on January 12 or 15. Interested participants may register at the NGAP office at the Rizal Memorial administration building with tel. nos. 525-6987 and 524-5160 and fax. No. 521-1587 or at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club



CANTADA

Espinosa hangs up gloves after defeat

IT'S time for Luisito Espinosa to hang up his gloves.

The two-time world champion bowed out of boxing yesterday after being knocked down by Augie Sanchez in the fourth round Saturday (Sunday in Manila) in Las Vegas.

Robert Aguallo, Espinosa's trainer, relayed the sad news to Manila after talking to Luisito and his wife-manager Manecherie after the fight at the Texas Station Gambling Hall.

"I spoke to Manecherie and Louie after the fight and we've all agreed that it's time for Louie to retire," said Aguallo. "He's lucky that he understands that his body just can't keep up anymore."

Indeed, the 33-year-old Espinosa was but a shadow of his former self against the favored Aguallo, who first floored the Filipino with a jarring right midway of the third before sealing his 27th win in 29 fights with a flurry of punches, 1:36 to go in the fourth

"My brain was working faster than my body, my body is just too old," Espinosa was quoted as saying after suffering his third defeat in his last four fights that brought down his win-loss record to 45-10 with 24 knockouts

Espinosa, who's been staying in California with Manecherie and their two kids since June 1998, also yielded a 12-round decision to Cesar Soto in May 1999 before bowing to Guty Espadas Jr. last April. Espinosa bested Mexican patsy Ramon Aragon last October

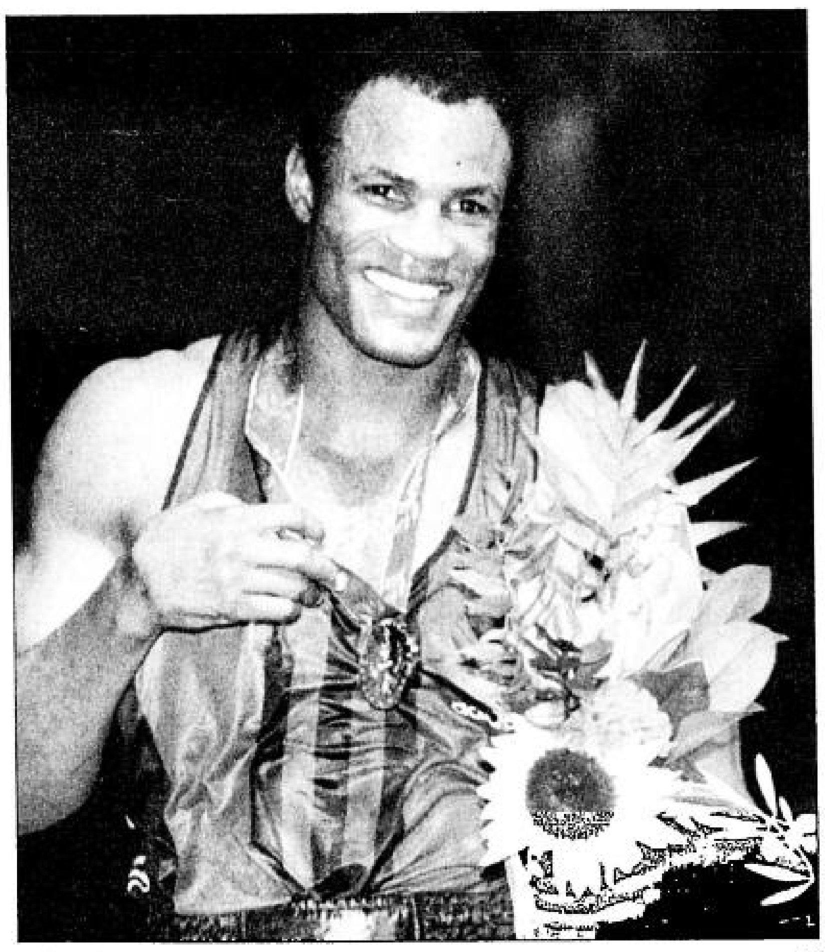
Aguallo vouched for Espinosa's preparedness for the fight against Sanchez, who bounced back from his fourth round knockout to Prince Naseem Hamed last August.

"Louie was in condition to fight. His training was good, his preparation was good, he was feeling good before the fight," said Aguallo. "The best that I've seen from him."

During the fight, however, Aguallo noticed that "time has caught up with him, his legs are not there anymore."

It convinced Aguallo that Espinosa should no longer continue to fight under any circumstances

Espinosa has had a great career. It shouldn't be tarnished any further.



AP

SAVON RETIRES

Cuba's Felix Savon poses with his gold medal for the heavyweight class of Olympic boxing at the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996. Savon, one of the greatest boxers in Olympic history, retired and will become coach of Cuba's national boxing team. The retirement of the three-time heavyweight Olympic champ was announced Sunday, Jan. 7, by the Cuban Boxing Federation and the official Prensa Latina news agency.

Aussie entry leads foreign challenge in Boracay meet

BORACAY—Australian funboarding champion Robbie Radiz leads the foreign competitors in the Cutty Sark Boracay Funboard Cup, second leg of the 2000-2001 Asian Windsurfing Circuit, which sailed off Monday from the Bulabog Beach

Close to 60 funboarders from 10 countries, including the Philippines, tested the waters during Sunday's official practice sessions before they finally show their wares as they vie for top honors in the five different divisions. The top three finishers in each division will then dispute the overall crown at the close of the six-day event on Saturday.

Radiz, in his early 20s, won the overall crown in the last two stagings of the event and is once again installed as the heavy favorite. If he wins for the third straight year, Radiz will take home the perpetual Boracay Funboard Cup on top of sailing equipment and giveaways from the generous sponsors

Out to crowd Radiz are two other world-ranked foreigners—compatriot Mike Nelson and Italy's Roberto Hoffmann—and a bunch of Filipino hopefuls, including those representing Cutty Sark.

Leading the Filipinos' charge are former SEA Games medalists Edward "Visegrip" Fajermo and German Paz.

Other Filipinos worth watching are Rico Cumayas, a former hobbyist who works as an area sales manager in the meat division of RFM Corp., Ian Bautista, a young architect at the Sanchez, Bautista and Associates; and Manny Cabili, a businessman engaged in the selling of the top-of-the-line windsurfing equipment.

The event, which also drew entries from Switzerland, Singapore, Denmark, Japan, Guam, Korea, The Netherlands and the United States, has Cutty Sark Scots Whisky as major sponsor and is presented by Neilpryde. Other sponsors are Sector Sport Watches, Greenland Funboard, Proteus Sports Limited, Action Asia and the Department of Tourism.

Cycling official appeals to POC

By June Navarro

EMBATTLED cycling head Joaquin Preysler yesterday said he will appeal to the Philippine Olympic Committee's decision regarding the withholding of its support to the Philippine Amateur Cycling Association.

The POC executive committee decided Friday to suspend its support to cycling and weightlifting pending investigation of the fact-finding body tasked to look into the matter.

Chair Carlos Tuason firmly stated that the Philippine Sports Commission will only recognize those national sports associations supported by the POC.

Preysler, however, questioned the POC executive council's decision, saying the athletes are bound to suffer with barely nine months left before the Southeast Asian Games in Kuala Lumpur takes off.

At worst, Preysler bared the POC has not yet furnished the Paca a copy of the executive board's resolution suspending its support and eventually the PSC's financial aid.

He said at least 20 medals are at stake in cycling in the biennial meet this September.

Rodones Sicat, president of the Philippine Weightlifting Association, shared Preysler's sentiments as he slammed the POC top brass of withholding support to their associations even before the investigative body could submit its findings.

Though the athletes will continue to receive their monthly allowances, Preysler and Sicat chorused their training would be hampered since there are events and tournaments, which need PSC funding.

Louisiana breeder is top pick

LEGENDARY cocker-breeder Dan Gray of Louisiana heads the elite entry list that will compete in the inaugural leg of the two-part World Slasher 8-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum on Jan. 15, 17 and 19.

A familiar figure in the local cockfighting scene, Gray won the World Slasher Derby in 1994 together with two-time Cocker of the Year Jun Santiago with their Firefly entries. Gray's champion cocks have since then become a dominant force in the Philippines.

Also in the foreign-flavored roster are Tom Cooper and Jeff Hudspeth of North Carolina, Pennie Fabros and Ric Cabullos of Canada, Sedfrey Linsangan of Guam, Riochi Saito of Japan, Jorge Torres and Romy Arciaga of California and Robert Rodgers and Johnny Philipps of Georgia.

Beefing up the visitors' campaign are the dreaded gamecocks of veteran cocker-breeders such as Ray Alexander (Alabama), Carol Nesmith (Mississippi), Bobby Jones and Donnie Joe Sparks (Texas), James Max/White and Oscar Akins (Tennessee) and Mike Glover and Scott Baird (Alabama).

The year's biggest cockfighting event will be hosted by Big Dome owner Jorge "Nene" Araneta, Rizal Gov. Ito Ynares and the Firefly Group.

US-based cockers joining derby

FILIPINO cockers from America and several other countries are coming home to join the forthcoming P10M Roligon 11th Grand Anniversary Derby.

Organizing themselves are some 35 overseas-cockers who will be fielding a total of seven entries, all using the name Cyberfriends.

Composing the group are Filipino *sabungeros* based in New York, California, Oklahoma, Florida, London, Hawaii, Paris, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, who got acquainted through the country's only cockers' website sabong.com.ph.

Also competing are Fil-Am fighters from San Francisco led by Ken Cantero of American Airlines, George Torres of Los Angeles and Bicolano Raymond Canet of Waco, Texas.

Set for Jan. 16 to Feb. 15, 2001, the derby is a special presentation of Rolly Ligon in cooperation with Thunderbird Power Feeds and San Miguel Beer.

Mandaluyong tilt on

THE FIRST big-time cockfighting event for 2001 fires of at Mandaluyong Coliseum beginning at 7 tonight via the "2nd Ucap Cobra/JBB Blue Blade Balbina 6-Cock Derby."

The event being hosted by the Cobra Group and engineer Sonny Lagon is sponsored by Sagupaan Super Feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc.

Seeing action are Ucap stalwarts led by its president Butch Macasaet, Danding Cojuangco, Patrick Antonio, Biboy Enriquez, Raymond Velayo, Esting Teopaco, Mario Villamor, Engr. Sonny Lagon, Cobra Group, Pete Rodriguez, Tony Tan, Pepito Ngo, Ram Lopez, Boyboy Roa, Mayor Claudy Bautista, Mauro Prieto, Jet Fernando, Ramon Manzanares, Joey delos Santos, Tony Litonjua, Ting Ariosa, Tito Reyes, Gary Reyes, Capt. Ben Rodriguez, Blandy Tolentino, Pol Estrellado, Alex Tang and W. Salud

Challenging them are guest participants Otic Geroso of Negros (two entries), Danny Ty, Boy de Roca, Tonette Luzurriaga, Boy Cuadra, Ganny Cupcupin, Argem Coliseum, Mayor Jessie Viceo, Robert So, Dennis Roldan and Romy Pamatmat.

Meanwhile, the "Mandaluyong Coliseum 9-Cock International Derby, slated on Jan. 30, Feb. 1 and 3, gets a big boost recently as five of the nine American cockers are arriving on the third week of January.

Heading the group are Chuck Berry of Oklahoma, last year's solo runner-up finisher, along with Paul Sparks of Alabama and Bobby Jones of Texoma Game Club (Texas), Gregg Ayroso of California and Travis Clark of Stone Country, Missouri.

Cantada to defend DHL-NGAP golf crown in Canlubang A13

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Japanese wins dangerous Dakar stage

SMARA, Western Sahara — Japan's Hiroshi Masuoka, driving a Mitsubishi, won Sunday's seventh stage of the 2001 Dakar Rally through the Western Sahara that ended without incident despite threats of military action from the Polisario Front should competitors drive through the disputed territory. "Everyone has arrived" in Smara. "Nothing has happened," said the rally's Paris command post. *AP*

BAP PRESIDENCY

Puyat backtracks; Jalasco keeps post

By June Navarro

GONZALO "Lito" Puyat yesterday said he has neither accepted nor rejected the post of president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

"As far as I'm concerned, I have not made any official statement accepting the BAP presidency until now," Puyat told the INQUIRER.

Breaking his silence since he was allegedly elected BAP president last Dec. 22 by the BAP Board of Directors, Puyat said he elected to shun the press pending clarification of issues that plagued the leadership of BAP president Freddie Jalasco.

Asked if Jalasco is still the BAP president, Puyat, the BAP chair, said, "No comment."

"Almost everybody is confused about my position. I want to make this clear: I'm working now for the BAP as a peacemaker, whose paramount concern is the interest and solidarity of our association," said Puyat.

Earlier, BAP executive vice president Boni Alentajan said in a press conference that Puyat had accepted the post of BAP president.

But Puyat denied he ever talked to Alentajan.

"I deny that I told Alentajan I had accepted the BAP presidency," said Puyat.

For his part, Olympic boss Celso Dayrit reiterated that Alentajan is no longer the POC legal counsel and added that the POC still recognizes Jalasco as BAP president.

"They (BAP officials) have not sent any communication informing us that an election has transpired in their association. In that case, Jalasco is still the BAP president as far as the POC is concerned," said Dayrit.

It was reported that Jalasco had a rift with his secretary general, Graham Lim, last month, triggering a snap election that installed Puyat back to his old post.

Hapee faces tough Welcoat

Standing	W	L
Shark	8	2
Welcoat	7	3
Blu Sun Power	6	4
Montaña	6	4
Hapee	5	5
Ateneo-Pioneer	4	6

Games Today
(Makati coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Skyland Estate vs Mercury freight (PYBL)
5:30 p.m.—Welcoat Paints vs Hapee Toothpaste

By Dennis U. Eroa

HAPEE Toothpaste isn't going to be very happy as it starts its semifinal campaign today in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Reason: the Sparklers of coach Steven Tiu are ranged against the league's formidable squad—defending champion Welcoat Paints.

The Paintmasters are riding high on the crest of a seven-game winning streak, while the Sparklers are still trying to rebound from a rollercoaster campaign in the eliminations where they finished with an even 5-5, win-loss card.

Gametime is 5:30 p.m., after the 3:30 p.m. PYBL clash between Skyland Estate and Mercury freight with the winner advancing to the final.

An added headache to coach Tiu is the return of playmaker Celino Cruz, who missed three games due to suspension. Cruz adds to an already formidable Welcoat backcourt composed of swingman Ren Ren Ritualo, Anton Villoria, Eugene Tan, Rene Suba and Jojo Manalo.

Even Welcoat's frontline is menacing. Yancy de Ocampo, Ryan Pamintuan, Derick Canlas and Francis Zamora have been playing inspired basketball.

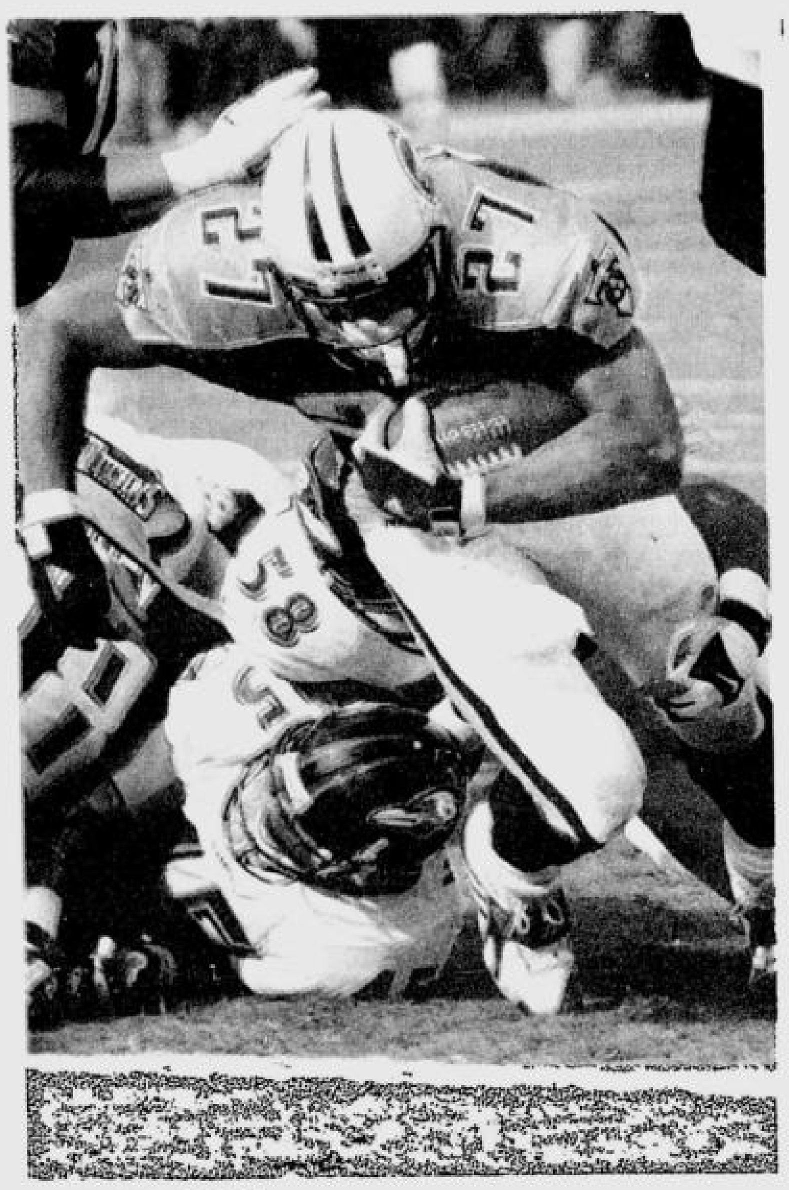
"We've got so many things to do," said coach Junel Baculi, who is eyeing to steer Welcoat to its fourth straight crown. "Anything can happen."

With its weak inside game, Hapee is pinning its hopes on the acrobatic duo of Niño Galig and Cyrus Baguio.

Tommy Norrdell and Mark Saquilayan can also make things harder for Welcoat if they can find their shooting touch.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Chino Trinidad and Perry Martinez, chief for basketball operations, yesterday formally appealed to the Office of the President through Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara for a repeal of a GAB resolution branding the PBL as "professional." *(See related story.)*

The GAB resolution, which was widely criticized by the basketball sector, is perceived to have wide-ranging effects on amateur sports as a whole.



TOUCHDOWN

Tennessee Titans' running back Eddie George (27) scores a touchdown as Baltimore Ravens' Corey Harris and Peter Boulware (58) try to keep him out of the end zone during their NFL game Sunday in Nashville. The Ravens won, 24-10, to set up a conference title game against the Oakland Raiders on Sunday. In the other game, the New York Giants beat the Philadelphia Eagles, 20-10. The Giants face the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday for the right to go to Tampa, Florida, on Jan. 28 for the Super Bowl. AP

PBL submits appeal to Malacañang

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball League yesterday hand-delivered to the Office of the President a letter of appeal asking for the repeal of the Games and Amusements Board (GAB) ruling branding the PBL as a professional league.

PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad and Chief Operating Officer Perry Martinez personally brought the letter to Malacañang, which the Office of the Executive Secretary received at 11:46 a.m. yesterday.

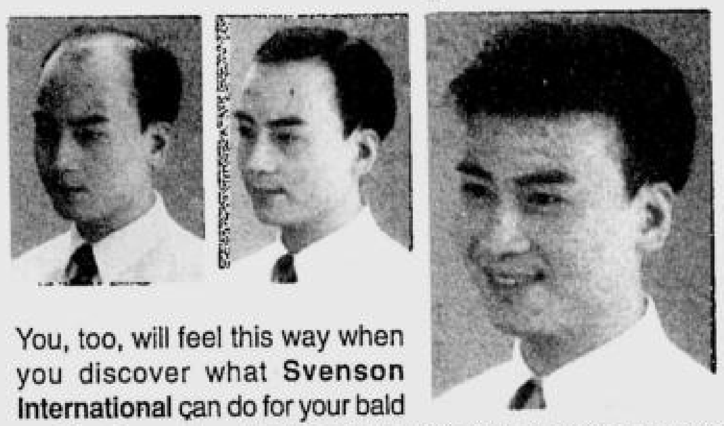
Under the law, once the ruling is appealed to the Office of the President, the GAB decision will be held in abeyance pending the final decision of Malacañang.

"The PBL would like to assure its member teams, the public and both our UAAP and NCAA friends that the league will continue to function and operate as it has the past 17 years as a non-professional league pending the final decision of the Office of the President," Martinez said.

The PBL, as incorporated on Aug. 23, 1989, is a non-profit and non-stock corporation organized primarily for the promotion and development of amateur basketball in the Philippines.

But the Games and Amusement Board (GAB) recently came out with an order for the PBL to declare itself professional in response to an appeal submitted by the Basketball Association of the Philippines through its secretary general Graham Lim.

"It's Amazing What Natural Hair Can Do For My Looks!"



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SPORTS ON TV

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BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Notre Dame Fighting Irish vs Seton Hall Pirates at 8 a.m., Villanova Wildcats vs Virginia Tech Hookies at 10 a.m., Tulane Green Wave vs UAB Blazers at 12:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

Chinese National Basketball League at 3 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

NBA - Seattle Supersonics vs Philadelphia 76ers at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Super Bowl XV Highlights - Oakland vs Philadelphia Eagles at 4 p.m. (r), Super Bowl I Highlights - Kansas City Chiefs vs Green Bay Packers at midnight (r) on ESPN

SWIMMING: World Cup (Brazil) Highlights at 10 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

WRESTLING; WWF Raw at 9:30 p.m. on Star Sports

GOLF: This is the PGA Tour at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BOXING: Great Fights of the Early 1900s at 8 p.m. (r) on ESPN

ICE SKATING: Starskates Latin 2000 at 9 p.m. on ESPN

VOLLEYBALL: FIVB Beach Volleyball – Season Roundup at 7 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

SOCCER: Asian Super Cup 2000 - Shimizu S-Pulse vs Al Hilal, Leg 2 at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Asian Football Show at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN and at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Spanish Football League at 7 p.m. on Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Deadline for PBA applicants today

APPLICANTS for the 2001 Philippine Basketball Association draft have until the end of office hours today to submit all the necessary documents that may make them eligible to join the Jan. 14 proceedings at the Glorietta.

So far, a record field of 65 players, almost half coming from the Metropolitan Basketball Association, and a huge chunk from the Philippine Basketball League, have applied.

Fil-American John Arigo, a highly touted 6-foot-5 shooting guard out of the University of Tampa, and Willie Miller, the former Letran ace who teamed up with Kerby Raymundo once upon a time and made the Knights an NCAA force, loom as the potential No. 1 picks.

Red Bull owns the right to pick first in the talent-laden pool, with Shell Velocity picking second and crowd-darling Barangay Ginebra selecting third.

Also included in the list is former Santo Tomas hotshot Marvin Ortiguerra and former MBA players Gilbert Demape and Michael Manigo.

Clippers clip LA Lakers, 118-95

LOS ANGELES—Lamar Odom scored a season-high 29 points and the Clippers defeated their crosstown rival for the first time in nearly four years.

The Clippers outshot and outrebounded the defending NBA champions to end a 16-game losing streak against their Staples Center roommates. They beat the Lakers for the first time since March 14, 1997, at the Forum.

The Lakers had won three straight and eight of their last nine, but the Clippers shot 56 percent and controlled the boards, 47-33.

Shaquille O'Neal had 33 points and 20 rebounds, while Kobe Bryant had 27 points.

Raptors 94, SuperSonics 92

Alvin Williams scored the winning basket with 0.1 seconds left as the Toronto Raptors overcame a late injury to Vince Carter to beat the Seattle SuperSonics 94-92 Sunday.

Carter, who had a game-high 23 points, collided with teammate Morris Peterson trying to prevent Rashard Lewis' dunk with 1:30 left and had to be helped off the floor with a bruised right calf. Carter is not expected to miss any games.

Peterson had a career-high 22 points in his first start since leading Michigan State to the NCAA championship last year. The rookie's previous high was 18 against Chicago.

Grizzlies 120, Bucks 117

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Shareef Abdur-Rahim scored 38 points as Vancouver used its highest-scoring game of the season to beat Milwaukee.

The 120 points were a season high for the Grizzlies and one point off their franchise record. Abdur-Rahim's 38 points were also one off his career high.

Mike Bibby had 16 points and 14 assists for Vancouver and Bryant Reeves had 16 points and eight rebounds.

Glenn Robinson scored 31 points for the Bucks and Ray Allen had 28.

Other results: Knicks 103, Wizards 87; Timberwolves 108, Suns 88; Nuggets 94, Hornets 87. *AP*

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Ex-cop abducts baby

Police arrested a former policeman on suspicion that he abducted for ransom the 8-month-old daughter of his former live-in lover in Sta. Cruz, Manila. Members of the Western Police District General Assignment Section caught Arsenio Guerrero, 49, of 193 Aquino Street, Eighth Avenue in Grace Park, Caloocan City, accepting P100,000 in marked bills and play money from the baby's mother inside a Jollibee outlet in Intramuros about 6:20 p.m. Sunday. *Jerome Aning*

Why Erap chose Edgardo Angara

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

WHY did President Erap choose Edgardo Angara over Ernesto Maceda as executive secretary?

The answer is simple: Maceda doesn't have respect for the President. He regards Erap as mentally inferior.

Maceda gave the media a left-handed defense of the President when he said that Erap didn't have the brains to plot the Dec. 31 bombings in Metro Manila that killed 16 persons.

If you have a friend or defender like Maceda you don't need enemies.

* * *

Angara has been given powers that his predecessors in the past and present administrations didn't have.

The former Senate president, and only recently, agriculture secretary, has powers to appoint senior officials and sign major government contracts in his new job.

Angara's dream of becoming the head of state has come true, thanks to an incompetent President.

* * *

But a lot of his former subordinates at the University of the Philippines, where he was once its head, say Angara is not as smart as many people think he is.

One UP official said that Angara's reputation as a brilliant lawyer, administrator and legislator is bloated out of proportion. "He's not that smart, he relies on his intelligent subordinates," said the UP official.

In short, Erap, according to this UP official, relies on Angara who will rely on others to run the country.

* * *

But Angara would still be much better than Maceda as executive secretary. Angara is not scheming like Maceda.

"Give Maceda a finger and he would want the whole hand," said a government official who knows the former Philippine ambassador to the United States.

"Baka agawan pa ni Manong **(that's what associates and subordinates call Maceda—RT)** ***ng puwesto si*** **Erap," said this official.**

* * *

Former President Cory Aquino now regrets having appointed Maceda as secretary of environment and natural resources, according to a reliable source.

Ms Aquino learned too late about the activities of Maceda as environment secretary.

I don't want to mention his activities in detail to avoid a libel suit.

But Maceda didn't earn the moniker "Erning Maleta" for nothing.

* * *

If Angara wants a clean image for the Estrada administration, he should revamp the Bureau of Customs.

The customs bureau has soiled the President's image because most of the big smugglers at the South Harbor and the Manila International Container are Mr. Estrada's friends.

If Angara shows his earnestness in cleaning up the customs bureau, Erap's relatives and mistresses will lay off the customs zone.

* * *

A reliable source at the customs bureau told me neither the Erap camp nor the opposition group had anything to do with the disappearance of publicist Bubby Dacer.

Why doesn't the Philippine National Police take a look at Dacer's dealings at the Bureau of Customs, so his kidnappers could be unmasked?

My informant said some people at the customs bureau were hurt by his hard-hitting Customsweek magazine, which exposed the irregularities at the graft-ridden government agency.

* * *

Not all officers at the graft-ridden Armed Forces Logistics Command (Logcom) are corrupt.

Lt. Col. Aldred Limoso, a graduate of Philippine Military Academy Class 1982, turned down requests by his superiors and fellow officers to favor certain suppliers of Logcom.

Limoso, former chief of Logcom's procurement division, said that the command should also give contracts to other suppliers who don't bribe key officers and enlisted personnel at Logcom.

Limoso was relieved as a result. He was replaced by an officer who is lower in rank.

The syndicate at Logcom didn't want him to get in the way.

Cop robs, beats up man who seeks help

TAXI driver Adriano M. Flores was on his way to the Philippine Children's Hospital before dawn yesterday to help his brother who was stabbed on New Year's Eve when he thought he saw the man who stabbed his 17-year-old sibling.

He asked SPO3 Eduardo Barcelo of the Kamuning police station's Police Community Precinct (PCP) 4 to arrest the suspect. But instead of apprehending the suspect, Barcelo was said to have hauled Flores to the police station.

Flores, of 607 Sulucan Street in Sampaloc, Manila, also accused the policeman of beating him up and taking his P3,500 and the money of his companion, student Damian A. Paterno, before bringing them to the police station.

Flores and Paterno were in a jeep on their way to the hospital about 2:20 a.m. yesterday when Flores saw his brother's assailant Reynante Roque, 18, a baker, of 288 Sampaguita St. Barangay Central, Quezon City walking along Quezon Avenue with two men, according to investigator SPO4 Edmund Senido.

Police said the two immediately alighted from the jeep and confronted Roque, whom Paterno recognized as the one who stabbed Christopher at the Quezon City Memorial Circle on New Year's Eve.

Paterno said he remembered Roque, whose companions ran away, as the one who took his cap during the stabbing.

Racelo arrived at the scene with two barangay security officials after Roque's two companions, who ran away when Flores and Paterno confronted him, called up police.

Paterno said the policeman and barangay *tanod* forced him into a tricycle and took him to PCP 4. Flores followed, and when he got there, Barcelo asked for his address.

Flores said that when he told Barcelo where he lived, the policeman boxed him on the ears and punched him on the jaw. He said Barcelo also ordered him and Paterno to undress to look at their wallets. He said Barcelo threw his empty wallet at him after taking the P3,500 it contained. He said the policeman also took P120 from Paterno's wallet. *Philip C. Tubeza*

People Power vs Metro garbage spreading fast

By Hazel P. Vila
and Jay D. Balnig
PDI Visayas Bureau

CON
PR
MGA BASURA
SA ISLA
BASURA sa Antique

CHILDREN are shown protesting the setting up of a landfill on Semirara Island (right). Photo below shows one of the barges containing garbage from Metro Manila anchored off the island.

PEOPLE Power opposition to the dumping of Metro Manila's garbage on Semirara Island in Antique has spread to nearby Boracay island in Aklan.

Residents and tourists of Boracay will stage a protest caravan tomorrow, from Caticlan, Aklan to San Jose, Antique 370 kilometers away.

Protesters also took to the beach on Sunday afternoon to denounce the Metro Manila Development Authority, its chair Jejomar Binay, and Presidential Adviser for Flagship Projects Robert Aventajado.

"In our demonstration, we made it known to these people (Aventajado and Binay) that we don't want Boracay and neighboring coastal towns to be adversely affected by the garbage in Semirara," said Ruchanie "Bebot" Gadon, vice president for internal affairs of the Boracay Foundation Inc.

In a telephone interview yesterday, Gadon told the INQUIRER that about 300 Boracay residents, establishment owners and tourists joined the demonstration held at the Summer Place in Balabag, Station 2, from 4 p.m. up to 7:30 p.m.

Boracay residents and businessmen also held a multi-sectoral meeting on Jan. 5 where they formed a loose coalition called "Sagip Semirara, Sagip Boracay."

Gadon said the multi-sectoral group would focus on protests, blockading Semirara Island using pumpboats, and calling the attention of national and international media.

The Aklan provincial board passed a resolution opposing the dumping of garbage on Semirara, citing foul smell and pollution of surrounding waters.

Semirara is about 15 nautical miles from Boracay.

"With thousands of trash tonnage, there will surely be seepage (of garbage fluids) and leachate will drain into the sea," according to the resolution passed last week.

It added that waves brought by the west wind, or "habagat," normally carried debris from neighboring islands to Boracay's White Long Beach.

Semirara residents continued to picket Dapdap pier and at the entrance of DMCI Holdings Inc., the firm which holds the Metro Manila garbage contract.

Dapdap pier is operated by the Semirara Coal Corp. (SCC), which is owned by DMCI Holdings Inc.

SCC also operates the Panian Coal Pit where the garbage was supposed to be dumped.

Protesters vowed they would not stop until all three barges returned to Manila.

The barges carrying garbage are anchored about 100 meters off the pier, emitting terrible stench that has reached the shore.

The barges were not allowed to dock by the Coast Guard because of the 20-day temporary restraining order issued by the Antique Regional Trial Court.

Bits and pieces of garbage from the barges have begun to clutter the sea, with some finding their way to shore.

There were reports that heavy rains on the island Sunday caused some of the garbage to leak into the sea.

Picturesque Semirara is one of nine islands comprising Caluya. The island's marine ecosystem has been described as one of the richest in the Philippines.

But Gonzalo Yuson, vice president of R-2 Builders, a member of a consortium that was supposed to operate the landfill, denied that trash from the barges had polluted Semirara waters.

"The barges are properly covered. My staff did not mention to me whether or not garbage has been leaking into the sea," Yuson said in a phone interview.

Dapdap is the lone pier on the island and is used by both residents and members of the SCC. Other DMCI barges are also docked in the pier waiting to be loaded with coal.

The Panian Mine Pit is about five kilometers from the community which, in turn, is five kilometers from Dapdap Pier.

The MMDA identified the landfill site as a 28-hectare area near the Panian Pit.

Private security guards of DMCI Holdings Inc. have kept residents and reporters from the Panian Coal Pit.

Residents told the Inquirer that at night, several hooded men carrying long arms roam the area.

But Yuson called the allegation as "too extreme." He maintained the consortium did not hire "hooded men" to harass the residents. *With report from Connie E. Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Hungry boy preys on QC churchgoer

By Philip C. Tubeza

A THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD boy had nothing to eat Saturday so he went to a Quezon City church, not for spiritual nourishment or to ask for alms, but to rob one of the parishioners.

The Grade III pupil, of Pajo Street, Project 2, Quezon City is now in jail after he snatched the gold necklace of Antonete D. Esteves, 25, of Molave Street, Project 3.

Esteves told investigator SPO4 Jaime Baylon that she was about to hear Mass at the Saint Joseph's Church on Aurora Boulevard, also in Project 3, about 6:30 p.m. Saturday when the boy took her necklace.

"I was about to enter the church when he sneaked up from behind and grabbed my necklace," Esteves said.

When she felt her necklace break, she cried out for help.

Some churchgoers who saw what happened went after the boy.

They wanted to beat him up after they caught the boy. Instead, they spared him and turned him over to the Anonas police.

The suspect said he was forced to snatch Esteves' necklace because he had nothing to eat that day.

"This is the first time I snatched somebody's necklace. I was forced to do it because I was really hungry," the boy added.

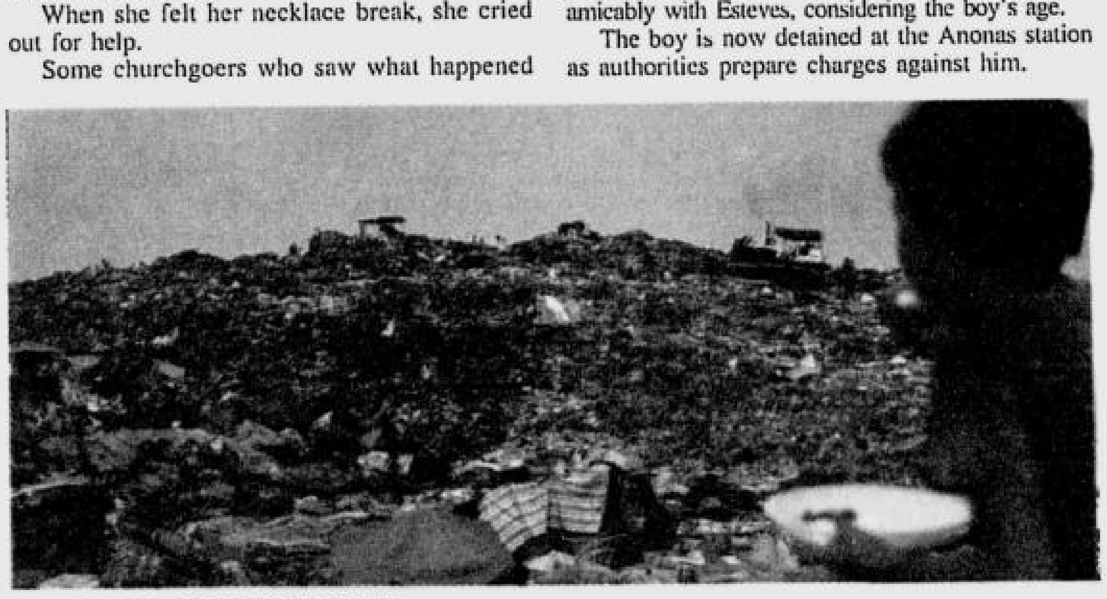
He said his family did not have enough money to buy food. His father is a part-time tricycle driver while his mother is a laundrywoman.

"My father told me not to go out of the house that day, but I was getting hungry," the boy said.

He added he learned some of the tricks of snatching from friends.

The boy's grandmother went to the police station yesterday and told the police she wanted to settle amicably with Esteves, considering the boy's age.

The boy is now detained at the Anonas station as authorities prepare charges against him.



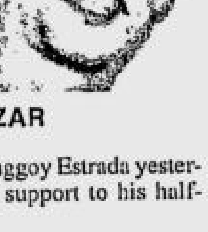
SMOKEY MOUNTAIN II

The alarming garbage crisis gripping Metro Manila is pictured in this dumpsite that has risen almost overnight in Tondo, Manila.

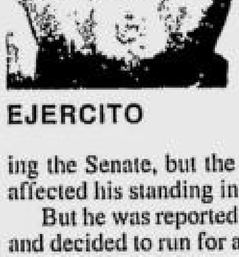
ROMY HOMILLADA

SAN JUAN MAYORALTY

JV in, Philip Cezar out



CEZAR



EJERCITO

JOSE Victor "JV" Ejercito, the President's son by former actress Guia Gomez, would push through with his plan to run for the mayoralty of San Juan.

No one, aside from Ejercito, has expressed interest in running for the top San Juan post so far.

Despite previous disagreements, incumbent mayor Jinggoy Estrada yesterday said he was giving his full support to his half-brother, JV.

Mayor Estrada had earlier stated he would push for the candidacy of incumbent Vice Mayor Philip Cezar, a former basketball star.

But Estrada clarified that Cezar would no longer be running for any elective post in the 2001 elections.

The San Juan mayor, who is currently serving his third and last term, refused to comment on his political plans, however.

"I will announce my plans in the coming days," he said.

Estrada was previously reported to be eyeing the Senate, but the political crisis has reportedly affected his standing in recent surveys.

But he was reported to have reconsidered his plan, and decided to run for a congressional seat instead.

If Jinggoy Estrada makes good his new political plan, he would be vying against former Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora. *Agnes E. Donato*

But where are the landfills?

By Cynthia
D. Balana

THERE are at least 352 potential sanitary landfill sites in the country, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources pointed out yesterday as it urged local governments to consider these sites to solve the current garbage crisis.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the DENR has identified and assessed these sites based on their geology, morphology, location, health safety sectors, accessibility, drainage, soils, proximity to groundwater and surface water, zoning and adjacent land use.

But DENR Secretary Antonio Cerilles did not say where these sites were located.

He also said that the DENR can provide local government units technical assistance in the planning and implementation in the upgrading of existing open dumpsites to environmentally sound sanitary landfills so that they conform with engineering and environmental standards.

Cerilles said any temporary garbage disposal sites to be established by Metro Manila local governments should at least be open controlled dumps that strictly conform with the Technical Guidelines for Municipal Waste Disposal prepared by the Presidential Task Force on Waste Management.

Conformity with the technical guidelines would at least ensure the proper management of controlled dumps and minimize any potential environmental and health hazards to their constituencies, Cerilles said.

He stressed that the DENR has always been against open dumps, such as the Payatas open dumpsite, because they pose high environmental risks although they are the cheapest way for disposing waste.

Tight security in Quiapo feast

SEÑOR NAZARENO

ABOUT 300 Western Police District operatives will be deployed in the vicinity of the Quiapo Church today to keep the peace and security amid the annual procession marking the feast of Black Nazarene.

WPD director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon said that security at the church, Plaza Miranda, and the streets around it such as Quezon Boulevard and Carriedo Street will be "exra-tight" because of the recent bombings in the metropolis.

Razon said he has met with the organizers of the procession and reminded them to police their own ranks to prevent any infiltrators. He said the organizers will field their own private security units.

Jerome Aning

Wazzzzup?!!

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(from page A18)

More: Making a comeback on ABC-5 is the inspiring drama, "Touched by An Angel."

'Survivor 2'

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QUEZON-1	THE 6TH DAY
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CINEMA-6	PING LACSON STORY
CINEMA-7	MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY
CINEMA-8	SPIRIT WARRIORS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	THE 6TH DAY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE 6TH DAY
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	MEET THE PARENTS
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CINEMA-14	GATAS
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Idolizing Welles and inspired by Gallaga, new director makes 'not just another film'

By Leah Salterio

YAM Laranas is the latest young Filipino to make it to the list of the new breed of young film directors, which includes Lav Diaz and Jeffrey Jeturian.

Shifting from directing TV commercials to film, Laranas makes his feature debut in Viva Films' sex-drama, "Balahibong Pusa," starring bombshell Joyce Jimenez.

Directing a full-length movie is a dream come true for Laranas, who started envisioning himself making movies since he was a teenager in Davao City. Inspired by the movies produced by Sampaguita Pictures which he watched on weekends, Laranas knew he wanted to be a filmmaker.

Yet, Laranas did not immediately pursue his dream. In college, he initially took up medical technology at the Immaculate Conception College (ICC) in Davao. When he went to Manila, he moved to the University of the Philippines and enrolled in Fine Arts.

He tried joining the Actors Workshop Foundation, which was offering scholarships, but he failed in the workshops. He later applied with the Mowelfund Film Institute, where he was accepted as a film scholar. His Mowelfund experience enabled him to work with director Nick Deocampo in a number of feature films.

His first break came when he worked with Raymond Red in "Bayani." Red was so impressed with him that he paved the way for Laranas to direct TV commercials. He also asked Laranas to be his cinematographer.

In 1993, Laranas directed his first TV ad, for Red Bull, which became a benchmark in commercial endorsements. He has since worked on many TV ads featuring celebrity endorsers such as Pops Fernandez for Presto Ice Cream, Francis Magalona for Royal Tru Orange, Richard Gomez for Agfa Film, Giselle Toengi for Head and Shoulders, Eddie Garcia for Manila Bank and even Belgian action star Jean-Claude van Damme for Red Bull.

He has also directed countless other product ads.

Blessing in disguise

In between directing TV commercials, Laranas worked as cinematographer for Carlitos Siguion-Reyna in the Rosanna Roces starrer, "Ang Lalaki sa Buhay ni Selya." He also worked with Peque Gallaga in "Diliryo," where he directed the TV commercial that featured the movie's lead stars, Giselle Toengi and Jomari Yllana.

He bagged the best experimental video award at the Brussels World Video competition for his short film "Death of a Butterfly."

These credentials became his aces when he was introduced by "Scorpio Nights 2" director Erik Matti to Viva's big boss, Vic del Rosario. Viva Films signed up Laranas on the basis of a demo reel he submitted.

"I was supposed to do my first film for Viva in 1999 but the project was delayed," Laranas says. "It turned out to be a blessing in disguise because it gave me time to prepare for 'Balahibong Pusa.'"

Laranas boasts he was able to wrap up filming in a short time, with hardly any late-night schedules.

"We rarely stayed up late to shoot," he says. "When I am working, there's less talk and more work. That's why all my stars were pleased to be working on the movie because they hardly worked till the wee hours."

Inspired by Gallaga

Laranas also wrote the "Balahibong Pusa" screenplay based on an original story by Matti and Uro de la Cruz.

"The advertising director in me makes me work on detailed shots of body parts and skin close-ups," Laranas says. "The visual style is really something that I can be proud of."

The Davaoeño, married to GMA-7 newscaster Gin de Mesa, claims that he was inspired by Gallaga in creating his debut movie. He earlier worked with Gallaga in the latter's "Diliryo."

"I admire Peque's work in 'Scorpio Nights' and 'Oro Plata Mata.' When I worked with him in 'Diliryo,' I saw how good a director he is. He handles his actors very well."

Laranas hopes he can grab the attention of the audience as early as the opening-credit shots of "Balahibong Pusa." The first love scene between Joyce and Jay also happens five minutes into the movie.

"I'm very happy because Viva gave me freedom in working on this movie. Boss Vic gave me all the support and allowed me to use all the modern film equipment of the company. For a first-time director, that's really very encouraging."

A different sexy movie

Laranas was all the more flattered when Boss Vic congratulated him after seeing "Balahibong Pusa."

Asked if the movie is bold, Laranas says, "As a first-timer, I cannot really gauge what's bold or not. I can give the cliché answer that it's done in good taste, but the bold scenes are really stylized. It's a sexy movie presented in a different way."

He is optimistic that "Balahibong Pusa" will stand a good chance at the box office, after the public has had a good dose of quality movies during the 10-day Metro Manila Film Festival. And despite competition from Hollywood flicks which will open on the same date (Jan. 10), Laranas is confident that his movie will be noticed.

"I have confidence in the material and the actors," he says.

"Balahibong Pusa" marks the screen reunion of Joyce Jimenez and her former real-life boyfriend Jay Manalo. It also stars Elizabeth Oropesa, Rica Peralejo and Julio Diaz.

Even before "Balahibong Pusa" is shown, Laranas is already scouting for another good material to be his second Viva movie.

Drawing inspiration from his idol, noted Hollywood director Orson Welles, who megged the film classic "Citizen Kane," Laranas wants to be a versatile filmmaker.

"What I'm sure of, is that it won't be another sexy film because I don't want to be boxed into that particular genre, although I must say that I'm attracted to complex socio-sexual relationships," says the young director

I AM A CAMERA. Laranas prepares a shot.

> Debuting with "Balahibong Pusa," Laranas wants to be a versatile filmmaker

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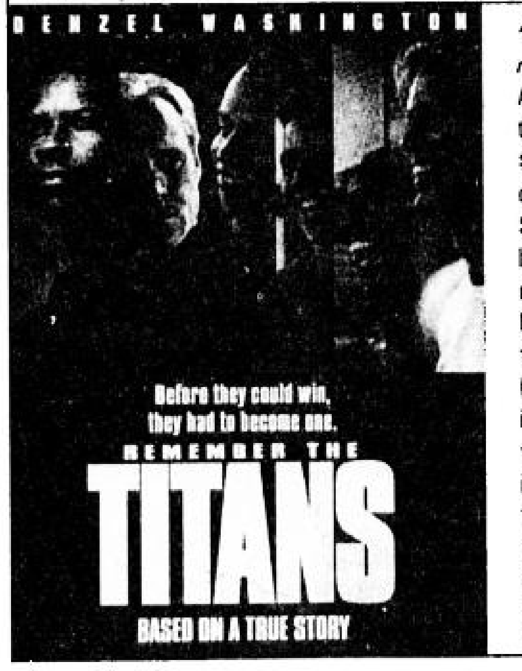
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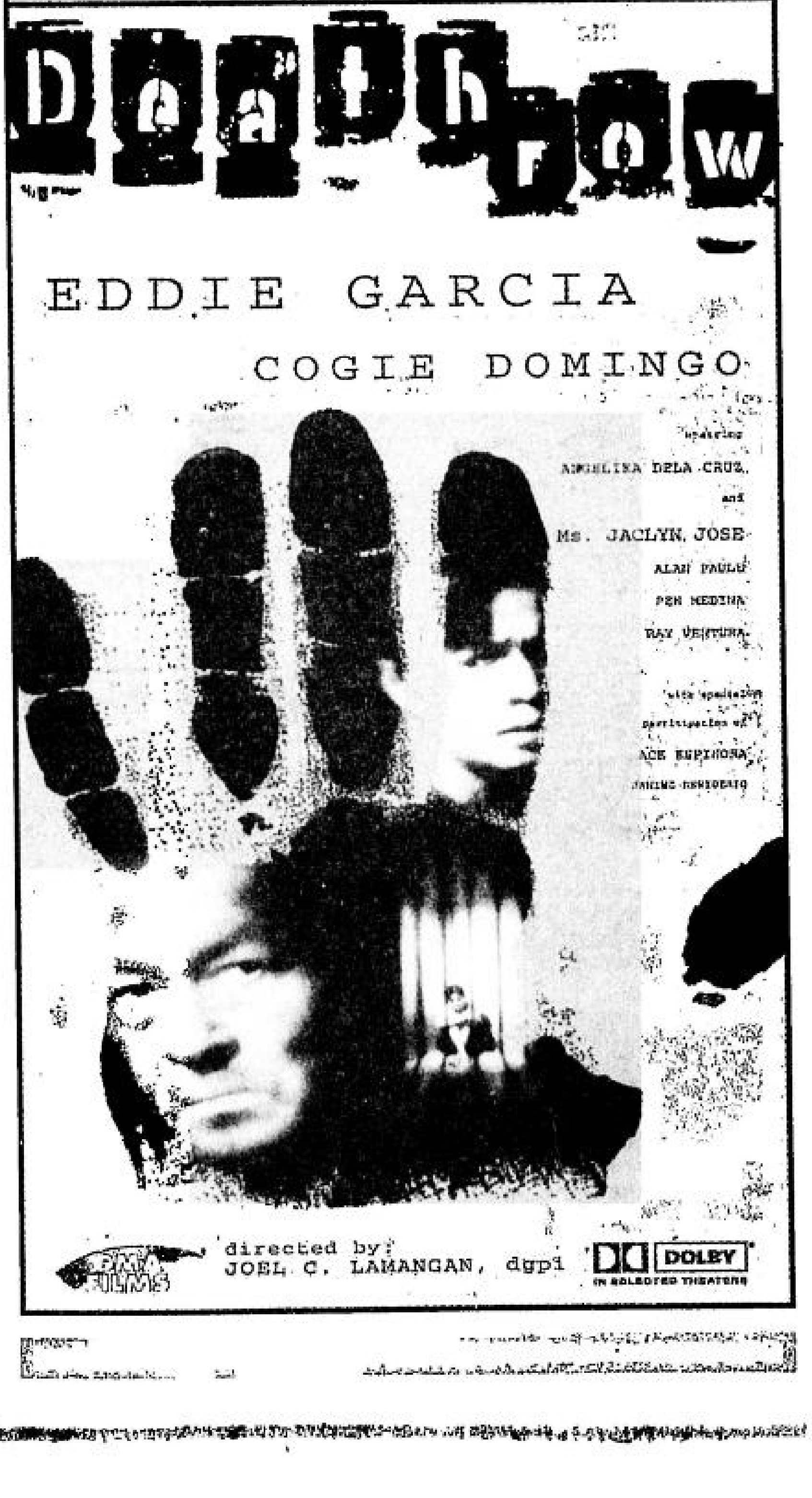


ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Jomari Yllana plays a role that's 'not easy to forget'

BY REMY M. UMEREZ

ONE scene in "Gatas . . . Sa Dibdib ng Kaaway" is already much talked-about even before the movie starts its commercial run.

The scene shows Jomari Yllana suckling at co-star Mylene Dizon's bosom. The man he plays is hungry and thirsty after being tortured by Japanese soldiers for days. Mylene character has nothing to offer him but the milk in her breast.

The controversial scene was inspired by a painting that director Gil Portes saw at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg in Russia in 1999. Portes was struck by the powerful painting by Italian artist Artemesia: A young woman breasfeeding her thirsty father who is on his way to the guillotine.

Portes also remembers a childhood story from World War II, of a young mother who was a wet nurse to a Japanese infant.

Yllana, who is still a very visible Bench model, greets 2001 with a movie role that he says will not be easy to forget.

"Gatas" is also Mylene's passport to stardom. She plays Pilar, a woman with a great capacity for love and passion. In exchange for her husband's freedom, she becomes a wet nurse to the motherless son of a Japanese officer, much to her husband's resentment.

Jomari plays the husband, Diego, a guerilla whose devotion to his country matches his hatred for the enemy.

Kenji Motoki is introduced as the kind and brave Japanese officer.

Jomari says "Gatas" is the kind of project that doesn't come often and he doesn't mind if he happens to be the second or third choice for the role.

"Whenever a movie offers something unique, I am naturally excited about it," he says. "It is the same kind of excitement I felt when I did 'Sa Pusod ng Dagat' where I played a male midwife. There is some sense of patriotism in the character of Diego in 'Gatas.' His love for his country almost equals his love for his wife. It is a love triangle story with a gripping twist."

Of Portes, he says: "He gave us the freedom to interpret our role the way we envision the character. I find such attitude both healthy and effective. It enables me to mature as an actor."

The controversial breastfeeding scene is a landmark of sorts in Philippine movies, although it is not the first time it is done. Some years back, the late Rita Gomez allowed her breast to be briefly milked by Al Tantay in "Gamitin Mo Ako." Ms Gomez consented because the director was the late Ishmael Bernal.

"Gatas" is the only movie Jomari did in 2000. He admits the slump in the movie industry has also affected him. Still, he is happy over the success of the Manila Metro Film Festival and hopes it is an indication of brighter things to come for the Philippine cinema.

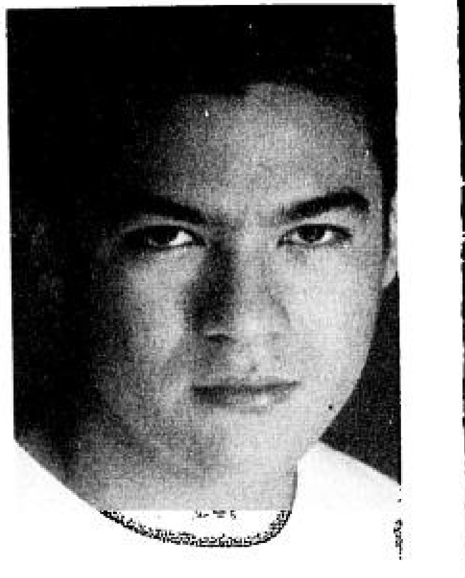
2 MEN AND A MOTHER. Jomari with "Gatas" costars Mylene Dizon and Kenji Motoki.

The actor seemed surprise when asked why he turned down Chito Roño's "Laro sa Baga," in which he would have played the role that eventually went to newcomer Carlos Morales. Did he reject it because it required frontal nudity?

"*Ganoon ba 'yon?*" Jomari says. "My manager (Douglas Quijano) must have turned it down even before I heard about the project."

Told that the rumor romantically linking him to Ara Mina refuses to die, he quips, "Good. It will be good for our sitcom 'Kiss Muna.'

"Seriously, I don't know how the rumor started. And why only now, when Ara and I have done a couple of movies in the past. *Sanay na ako sa intriga kaya ayokong personalin ang tsismis.* Even my wife laughs off the rumor."

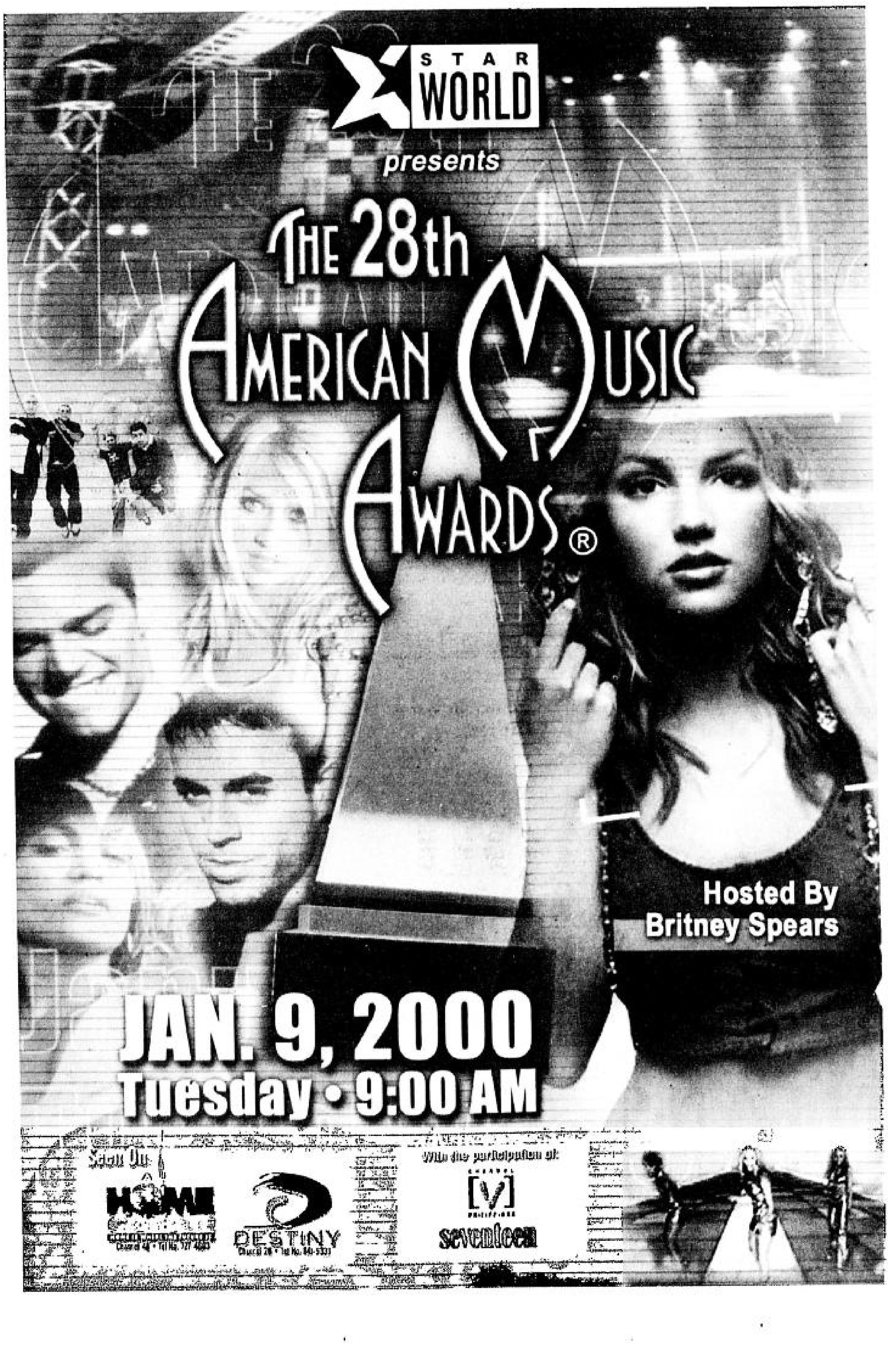


MAKING UP for lost time, Jomari Yllana wants to do more movies this year.

He confirms that his wife Aiko Melendez is running for councilor in the May local elections. They hope to have another child as soon as the campaign season is over.

By mid-2001, Jomari will be busy preparing for an international racing competition. The first leg will be held in Subic. The rest will take place in China, Malaysia, Thailand and Korea.

Although racing brings him a substantial income, making movies remains his biggest passion. "I would like to make up for lost time in 2001," he says.



Striking thematic pertinence

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

GIL Portes' movie, "Gatas . . . Sa Dibdib ng Kaaway," tells a provocative story of one woman (**Mylene Dizon**) who is shared by her Filipino guerilla husband (**Jomari Yllana**) and her Japanese lover (**Kenji Motoki**) during the last year of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

This sharing is presented in a particularly striking way: Dizon breastfeeds both her and Yllana's baby and Motoki's infant by his dead wife. The fact that she sustains both babies' lives in this way adds a striking thematic pertinence that the movie effectively exploits.

Unfortunately, other aspects of the film are less on the up and up. There is a certain plainness and languor to the storytelling that soon makes viewers' attention stray, and quite a number of the characterizations are similarly lacking in energy and texture.

Yllana has the interesting role of a fisherman who becomes a guerilla after the Japanese officer has cuckolded him, but he merely goes through the motions of playing the part.

Motoki's Japanese officer is even more two-dimensional, so utterly nice and considerate and loving to the very end. It's good that the movie is veering away from the cliché characterization of Japanese soldiers as absolute beasts, but this deviation goes too far to the other extreme.

The supporting roles are even more sketchily limned, like the character played by Inez Veneracion, who ends up as Yllana's "replacement" love after he leaves his wife.

Only Dizon's characterization comes on strongly and credibly in this movie, as the sensitive actress effectively mines her role for all of the complex issues and emotions it contains. But, with weak actors to interact with, Dizon's committed and perceptive performance can't really peak as it should.

The movies they're making

AMONG the local films to be shown this month are the sexy flicks, "Balahibong Pusa" with **Joyce Jimenez** and "Kangkong" with **Brigitte de Joya**.

The first movie also showcases **Rica Peralejo** in her first "really daring" role, so we can expect more Rica starrers to be conceptualized by producers this year.

Since she's a new "darer and "barer," viewers would like to see more—and more—of what Rica has to offer—until another new face (and body) happens along.

So, what happened to the vaunted shift of local movies from "bold" to "inspiring," as prompted by the huge success of "Tanging Yaman?"

Well, it'll take months before producers can "re-tool" their movie factories to churn out this new kind of film. In the meantime, the bold movies shot last year will first have to be shown, so producers can recoup their investment.

Incidentally, producers should realize that, unlike making sexy flicks, coming up with inspiring family films as effective as "Tanging Yaman" isn't just a matter of deciding to make the shift. You've got to have the sensibility and sensitivity to do it—and that's what many movie people lack!

This reminds me of the time when "Jose Rizal" was earning big money at the tills. A number of commercial directors confided to me then that they too were going to bankroll significant historical films—but here it is, two years later. and they have yet to do so!

The problem with exceptional movies like "Jose Rizal" and "Tanging Yaman" is, you can't "copy" them. If you don't have what it takes. viewers will see the difference, and stay away from your movie in droves. The thing is to do what you can genuinely do best.

So, if producers want to ride the new "inspiring family film" bandwagon, they just have to tap the few screenwriters and directors we have who know how to come up with films that are truly heartwarming, sensitive and perceptive. All else is fakery and self-delusion that the viewing public won't buy.

New shows on ABC-5

STARTING next month, ABC-5 will present an anime showcase every Saturday and Sunday from 6 to7 p.m. The showcase of Japanese animated series includes 14 half-hour programs, most of them dubbed in Taglish. Among the titles: "Mahha Go Go Go," "Shulato," "Restol" and "Lazenca."

This March, the channel will start telecasting five new sitcoms or "dramedies:" "Normal, Ohio," starring **John Goodman** as a beer-drinking, sports-loving man who happens to be gay.

"Working," starring **Fred Savage** ("The Wonder Years"), now all grown up and playing **Mark Peyser**, a new graduate who wants to make it big in the corporate world.

That "'70s Show," guaranteed to generate waves of nostalgia among baby boomers, and curiosity among today's teenagers. The show follows a group of teen friends coming to terms with hormones, parents and changing norms in the 1970s.

"Life with Roger," a wacky show about two men with nothing in common who become roommates and close friends. **Jason (Maurice Godin)** invites **Roger (Mike O'Malley)** to room with him, and life with Roger turns out to be anything but dull.

"Outside Cicero," on the adventures and misadventures of three twentysomething brothers who attempt to co-exist peacefully under the same roof.

STRIKING/ A16

BUSINESS

RAUL O. MARCELO, Editor ▩ CORRIE S. NARISMA, Assistant Editor

Wal-Mart still keen on RP

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

TOP officials of Wal-Mart are set to arrive this week to meet with government officials and discuss the American retail giant's plan to establish its presence in the country, including the possibility of renewing its takeover bid for Uniwide Holdings Inc.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura and Finance Secretary Jose T. Pardo disclosed that they would meet with Wal-Mart officials this Friday where they hope the retail giant would firm up its long-delayed plans in the country. Buenaventura and Pardo are Wal-Mart's main government contacts since it first expressed interest in setting up shop in the country in 1998.

Wal-Mart apparently remained keen on the Philippines despite the prevailing political crisis, which has pushed two major French retailers—Carrefour and Casino group—to abandon their investments in the country.

Buenaventura said they would ask Wal-Mart to take a second look at ailing Uniwide whose recovery has been left hanging after Casino decided to abandon its previous plan to infuse P4 billion into the discount retail chain.

The BSP has already computed Casino's dollar infusion into its gross international reserves projection for this year and Buenaventura was confident that Wal-Mart could take up the slack.

Wal-Mart was close to signing a deal with the Gow family for control of Uniwide in 1998 but differences on prices and further disclosure of financial troubles in Uniwide prompted Wal-Mart to back off at the last minute.

Since then, Wal-Mart has sent feelers of its strong interest not only in establishing its warehouse store chain in the Philippines but also building its regional base and depot to expand its presence in Asia as expressed by Wal-Mart International president John Menzerin in his meeting with President Estrada last year.

Wal-Mart is still weighing its options on whether it would go into the Philippines on its own or with several prospective partners with established operations in the country.

On top of establishing a retail network in the country, Wal-Mart is also interested in buying Philippine-made merchandise for sale in its American stores. Wal-Mart currently buys $60 million worth of merchandise from the Philippines.

91-day treasury bill yield eases further to 12.598%

THE 91-DAY treasury bill yields fell for an eighth straight time at the government's sale of the securities yesterday after the central bank reduced overnight rates.

At today's Bureau of Treasury auction, the average yield on the 91-day bill, which banks use to set lending rates, fell to 12.598 percent from 12.883 percent last week.

The Treasury was able to sell the full P2 billion on offer, as investors submitted bids for P4.8 billion worth of debt.

The Treasury also sold a total of P2 billion of 182- and 364-day bills, after rejecting too-high bids last week. The 182-day bill yield fell to 13.657 from 14.724 percent. The 364-day bill yield fell to 14.24 from 15.067 percent.

The central bank reduced overnight rates half a percentage point on Friday, bringing total reductions to two percentage points since December, following a four-point increase in October in a move to slow the peso's slide.

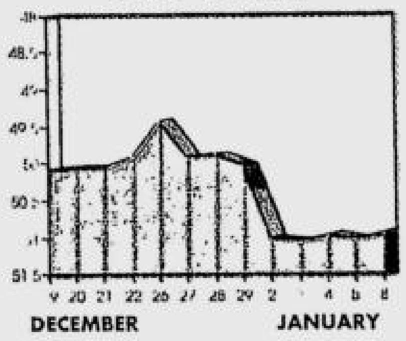
Meantime, Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said it might revert back to its regular offerings of treasury bills at its auction next week.

The Treasury yesterday increased its offering of 91-day T-bills to P2 billion from the usual P1 billion. The 182-day and 364-day bills were reduced to P1 billion each from their usual P1.5 billion each. *Bloomberg, Reuters*

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY ROBERT B. ANDRES

Peso-Dollar Rate

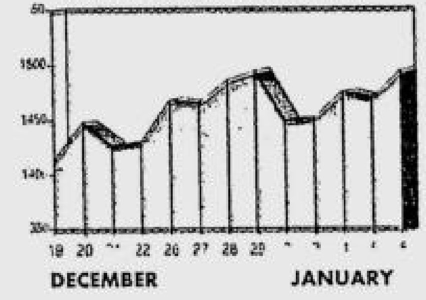
₱50.94 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 8, 2001

¥116.30 = $1
The US dollar was trading
at 116.30 as of 5 p.m.,
Jan. 5, 2001

GOLD:$268.80/269.30
per ounce Hong Kong,
Jan. 8, 2001

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks end up

STOCKS closed slightly higher yesterday, with some fund interest in selected blue chips providing the only real action, traders said.

The 33-share composite index closed up 25.30 points, or 1.72 percent at 1,494.38 on turnover of P522.18 million.

"Right now there's some selected bargain hunting by some brave investors," Keppel Securities Philippines Inc. research head Chris Canilanza said.

He added that some interest-rate sensitive stocks were helped by the central bank cut in its key overnight rates effective yesterday and indications it may cut again in the near term.

United Coconut Planters Bank fund manager Vanessa Lim said there was some foreign fund interest in stocks regarded as defensive plays in a weak market or having some earnings growth potential this year. Chief among these were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and SM Prime Holdings. *Reuters*

Meralco sees profit drop

MANILA Electric Co. said it may report a 9-percent drop in 2000 net income because it was unable to recover higher interest and foreign exchange costs with a rate increase.

Daniel Tagaza, the company's controller, estimated 2000 profit at P3 billion compared with P3.3 billion in 1999. The numbers are unaudited and preliminary.

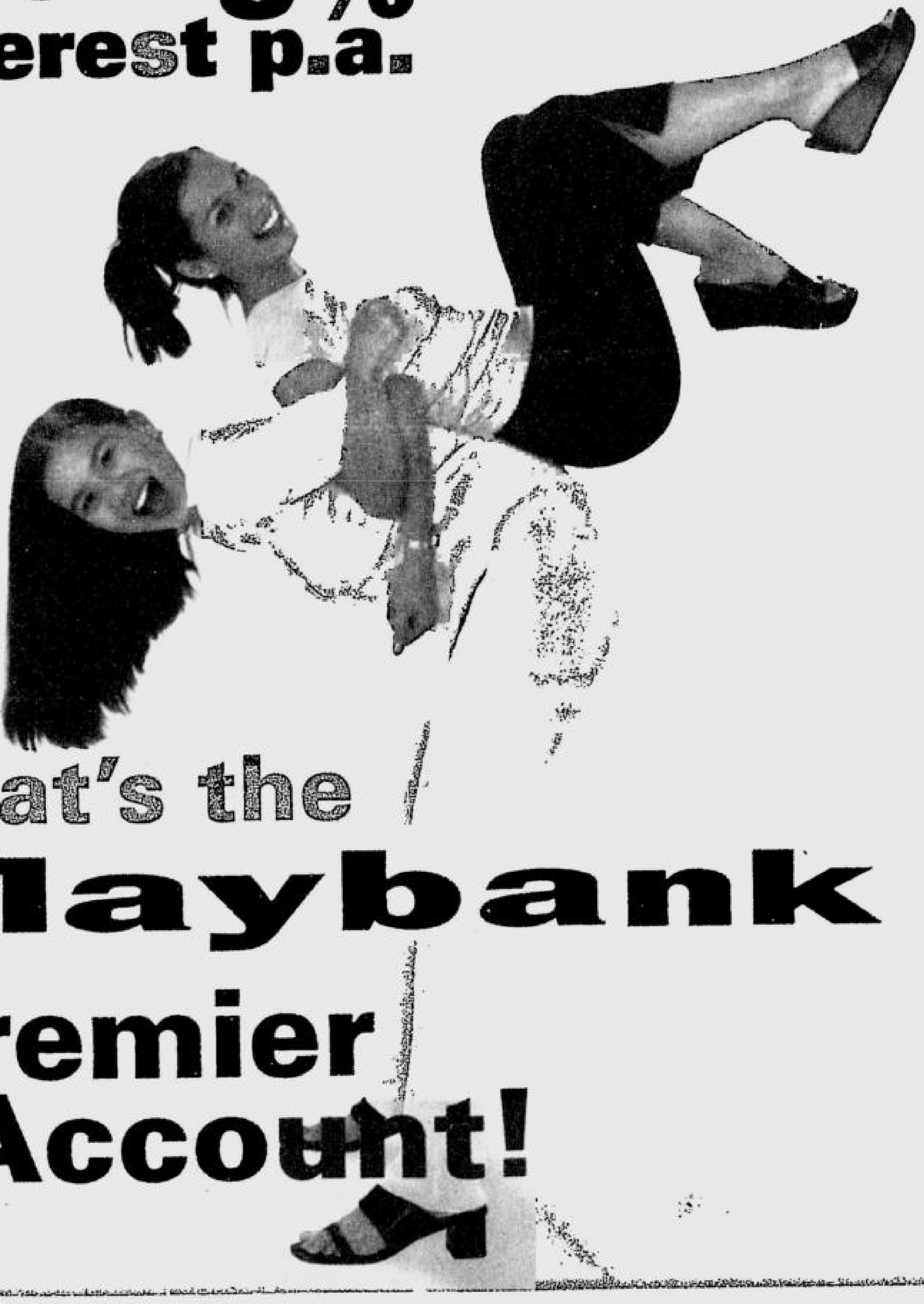
"We would still post a net income but we might be experiencing a decline from a high of 10 percent to a low of 5 percent," Tagaza said.

Creditors won't be pleased. Tagaza estimated the company's return on rate base, a measure of profitability, at around 6 percent, below the minimum 8 percent required by international lenders such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. That may force it to cut capital expenditures this year, he said.

Manila Electric, which has the exclusive franchise to supply electricity to Manila and surrounding areas, is asking government regulators to approve a rate increase of 30 centavos per kilowatt-hour. The application—filed last April—has yet to be approved.

Net income in the nine months to Sept. 30, 2000, fell by 7.9 percent to P2.55 billion from P2.77 billion in the same period last year. *Bloomberg*

A 2-in-1 account that gives us as high as 8% interest p.a.



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The Maybank Premier Account has all the benefits of a savings and a checking account in one! Plus, with its tiered interest rates of up to 8% p.a. and free personal accident insurance coverage of up to P500,000*, you can rest easy knowing that both you and your money are secure.

The Maybank Premier Account also gives you:
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- **Automatic fund transfer**
  Because your money can be automatically transferred from the savings account to checking, you can issue checks so long as you have sufficient funds in your savings account.
- **Unlimited withdrawals**
  Enjoy your savings whenever and as often as you need to.
- **Checkbook and ATM card**
  Get an exclusive checkbook and ATM access through over 3,000 Megalink member bank ATMs nationwide.
- **Passbook and monthly bank statements**
  Manage and monitor your account easily with a passbook and regular bank statements.

So whichever way you look at it --- a savings account with checking convenience or a checking account that earns interest --- the Maybank Premier Account is the only 2-in-1 account you'll ever need as an individual or even for your business. All these from Maybank --- one of the top 20 banks in Asia and the first 100% foreign-owned commercial bank in the country with the most extensive branch network backed by over US$34 billion in assets. For inquiries, visit your nearest Maybank branch or call 521-7451.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3272, Series of 2000.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of January 8, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.00	59	58	59	1,432,600
China Banking Corp.	750.0	750	740	750	8,510
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	18.00	18	18	18	3,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	53.50	54	53	53.5	87,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	185.0	187	184	187	70,810
Philippine National Bank	37.00	37	36.5	36.5	7,200
Phil. Savings Bank	29.00	30	29	30	15,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	30.00	32	30	32	57,400
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.56	4,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1375	1385	1340	1340	7,050
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1200	1220	1150	1155	21,340
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	49.50	50	49.5	50	16,800
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	.4500	.45	.45	.45	160,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	675.0	675	675	675	50
Island Info and Tech Inc.	.0410	.041	.041	.041	1,000,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	.4400	.44	.44	.44	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	4.00	4	4	4	20,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	.3100	.31	.31	.31	10,000
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	870.0	890	870	890	133,690
Ivantage Corp.	.8600	.86	.86	.86	10,000
Philweb.com Inc.	.0330	.033	.029	.031	140,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. "A"	46.00	46.5	46	46.5	101,000
Manila Electric Co. "B"	48.00	50	48	50	750,800
Petron Corp.	1.18	1.26	1.18	1.26	1,921,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	.9200	.92	.92	.92	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	.7400	.75	.74	.75	140,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	.3700	.37	.37	.37	90,000
Republic Cement Corp.	.3300	.33	.33	.33	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	9.50	9.5	9.5	9.5	1,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	30.50	30.5	30.5	30.5	2,600
Pancake House Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	1,000
Pure Foods Corp. "A"	89.50	100	89.5	100	2,000
Pure Foods Corp. "B"	100.0	100	100	100	1,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	49.00	50	49	50	160,900
San Miguel Corp. "B"	54.00	54.5	53.5	54.5	183,800
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	7.30	7.4	7.3	7.4	2,227,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	.2500	.25	.2	.2	80,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	12,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	900
Ajo.net Holdings Inc.	.8000	.8	.8	.8	20,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	.0042	.0042	.0042	.0042	3,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.18	2.28	2.18	2.28	173,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2.00	2	2	2	5,000
Bacnotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	8.20	8.2	8.2	8.2	3,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.90	2.95	2.9	2.95	2,413,000
Southeast Asian Cement	.2100	.21	.21	.21	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	.2700	.27	.27	.27	640,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	.0450	.045	.045	.045	100,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.00	2	2	2	4,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	20.75	21	20.5	20.5	26,500
Global Equities Inc.	.3200	.32	.32	.32	500,000
House of Investments Inc.	.6800	.68	.68	.68	10,000
Ionics Inc.	14.50	14.5	14.5	14.5	45,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	.7800	.8	.78	.79	4,910,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	.5100	.51	.5	.5	11,000,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.5800	.59	.58	.59	5,300,000
Solid Group Inc.	.4300	.47	.43	.44	27,970,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	.3000	.32	.29	.32	5,100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.3000	.35	.3	.35	1,050,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.40	1.4	1.4	1.4	4,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.20	6.4	6.2	6.4	12,000
Music Corp.	2.90	2.9	2.9	2.9	50,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	.6000	.6	.56	.56	1,420,000
Picop Resources Inc.	.1050	.105	.105	.105	50,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	7.00	7	6.8	6.8	51,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	7.50	7.6	7.5	7.6	150,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	.6400	.65	.64	.64	350,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.7500	.75	.73	.74	1,580,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	.1600	.165	.16	.165	220,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	50.00	50	50	50	175,900
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	40,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	2.90	2.9	2.7	2.85	241,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (PDR)	675.0	690	675	690	4,300
Jollibee Warrants	9.30	9.3	9.3	9.3	10,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	.0026	.0026	.0026	.0026	60,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	700
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.30	5.5	5.3	5.5	4,283,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	.3000	.3	.3	.3	200,000
C & P Homes Inc.	.1900	.2	.19	.2	3,120,000
Empire East Land Inc.	.3100	.36	.31	.34	25,090,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.38	2,725,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	.0500	.05	.05	.05	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	.3200	.32	.32	.32	10,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	.1300	.13	.13	.13	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.60	6	5.6	6	14,560,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.0825	.0825	.0825	.0825	100,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	.0048	.0048	.0048	.0048	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0036	.0036	.0036	.0036	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	.2350	.235	.235	.235	150,000
OIL					
Pacifica	.0140	.015	.014	.015	7,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,714,810	145,535,250.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	274,674,940	255,136,925.00
PRO	50,388,000	121,085,790.00
Mining	5,150,000	54,450.00
OIL	7,000,000	103,000.00
GRAND TOTALS:	338,927,750	521,915,415.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	547.73	UP5.46
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,097.06	UP20.98
PRO	519.17	UP21.31
Mining	1,226.06	DOWN 1.09
OIL	1.71	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	780.70	DOWN 9.53
Composite	1,494.38	UP25.30

NO. OF ADVANCES: 34; NO. OF DECLINES: 25; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 35;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 94; NO. OF TRADES: 2,273

CURRENCIES

Jan. 8, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.043079	1.000000	51.0920
Japan	Yen	0.008954	0.008584	0.4386
United Kingdom	Pound	1.568478	1.503700	76.8270
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.133749	0.128225	6.5513
Switzerland	Franc	0.652823	0.625861	31.9765
Canada	Dollar	0.695942	0.667200	34.0886
Singapore	Dollar	0.603634	0.578704	29.5671
Australia	Dollar	0.595297	0.570711	29.1588
Bahrain	Dinar	2.766935	2.652661	135.5298
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.278169	0.266681	13.6253
Brunei	Dollar	0.599953	0.575175	29.3868
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000110	0.000105	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.024141	0.023144	1.1825
UAE	Dirham	0.284024	0.272294	13.9120
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.000792	0.0405
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.958700	48.9819
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.490176	25.0441
France	Franc	0.152450	0.146153	7.4672
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.435039	22.2270
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.069671	3.5596
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.023766	1.2143
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000495	0.0253
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.161242	8.2382
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004782	0.2443
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005762	0.2944
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.023766	1.2143
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.217298	62.1942

PLDT to buy TV network in two weeks

By ANTHONY O. ALCANTARA

THE PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. would decide this week or next week whether it would buy a majority stake in GMA Network Inc. or in Associated Broadcasting Corp., persons familiar with the negotiations said yesterday.

"PLDT hopes to make an offer within this week or next week. The price, prospects of business, cash flows, revenues, market positioning, etc., would be considered in the decision," one source told the INQUIRER.

PLDT, the country's No. 1 telecommunications company, is holding talks to acquire a two-thirds stake either in GMA or ABC as part of its "convergence" strategy.

"Convergence" has become a "digital-age" term that vaguely refers to the marriage of telecommunications, the Internet and broadcasting.

PLDT already has interests in two mobile phone companies, an Internet service provider and a radio station.

Persons familiar with the negotiations said PLDT was already deliberating on which television station would best help it put content for its convergence strategy.

One source said ABC had a slight advantage over GMA because it would cost less to buy the network. ABC also was more flexible than its bigger competitor, he said.

"It's a toss-up between Channel 7 (GMA) and Channel 5 (ABC). Half of (Manuel Pangilinan's) advisers want Channel 5 while another half want Channel 7. We're just waiting for PLDT to make a decision," according to another source.

GMA already sent an offer to PLDT last month and was just waiting for the telecommunication firm's response. The TV network is owned by the Jimenez group, which controls 35 percent; the Duavits, 35 percent; and the Gozon group, 30 percent.

GEI to spin off non-IT businesses

By DORIS C. DUMLAO

GLOBAL Equities Inc., which recently shifted into the information technology business, will spin off its non-IT ventures into Global Airport Container Yard Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary.

Prior to a share-swap deal that allowed the backdoor listing of computer school Systems Technology Institute Ins. (STI) and its affiliate IT solutions provider Systems Standards Inc. (SSI), GEI had investments in real estate and health care products manufacturing.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, GEI said the spin-off was an initial step to GEI's reorganization into an IT business.

Global Airport Container Yard, for its part, will be renamed GEI Assets Corp. and its primary purpose will be changed from warehousing, packaging and manufacturing to a holding company.

GEI, formerly La Suerte Gold Mining, manufactures medical accessories and antique-style electronics products. It was also engaged in property development.

Exemptions from tender offer rule OKd

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has exempted from the tender offer rule acquisitions of listed firms made in relation to foreclosure and rehabilitation proceedings.

The SEC said that upon written application, it might exempt from the mandatory tender offer rule purchases related to foreclosure proceedings made by the company's creditors and involving duly constituted pledges or security arrangements.

Also, the SEC said it might also exempt purchases in connection with corporate rehabilitation under court supervision, such as the case of the Uniwide Group, and the privatization of government-owned corporations undertaken by the government.

Under the SEC's new implementing rules and regulations, which took effect early this month, a person is mandated to offer to buy the shares held by the minority shareholders of a listed company if he intends to acquire at least 15 percent of the same company. The rule also applies if an existing shareholder intends to increase his stake in a listed company by 30 percent, or acquire more than 50 percent of the said company's shares.

The rule applies on a pro rata basis. This means that the amount of shares covered by the tender offer should be equal to the number of shares the person intends to acquire in a listed company.

Acquisitions of shares of listed companies in an open market at the prevailing market prices are automatically exempted from the tender offer rule provided that such purchases comply with the disclosure requirement of the SEC.

The rules are in line with the provisions of the Securities Regulations Code, which was enacted last August.

Citibank's local capital now at ₱4.5B

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has allowed Citibank NA to treat over P2 billion in unremitted profits as part of its permanent capital.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said in an interview yesterday that the Monetary Board approved Citibank's request to convert its unremitted profits and shore up its permanent capital to about P4.5 billion.

"This is good for the banking system because this means Citibank will become a stronger bank," Reyes said.

The central bank earlier allowed Citibank to go into Internet banking through a service dubbed as "Citidirect" for its corporate clients.

Reyes told reporters foreign banks were taking a more active role in the local retail banking sector.

Standard Chartered Bank has applied for a universal banking license while the central bank has allowed Banco Santander Central Hispano to acquire, in full, its local subsidiary.

Standard Chartered has informed the central bank of its intention to acquire a local savings bank similar to what HSBC Corp. has done in acquiring PCI Savings Bank.

An expanded banking license is a requirement before a foreign bank can acquire 100 percent of a local savings bank.

ING Barings got its universal banking license in 1998 while HSBC secured a license in 1999.

As for Banco Santander, which owns 60 percent of Banco Santander Philippines Inc., can now buy out its local partners.

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14 MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	490,000		Apr-95
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16 MANILA POLO CLUB		2,500,000	Feb-95
17 MLA SOUTHWOODS "A"	820,000		Sep-94
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PricewaterhouseCoopers will be running a controlled process in the sale of the minority interest in this company. Additional information is available upon request. To receive the Information Memorandum, you will first be required to sign a confidentiality undertaking with the company.

Interested parties should contact Mr. Marfred Pranada by January 31, 2001 at the address and numbers listed below.

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GOLF COURSE VS WATER SUPPLY

Macabud farmers say Metro water supply in danger

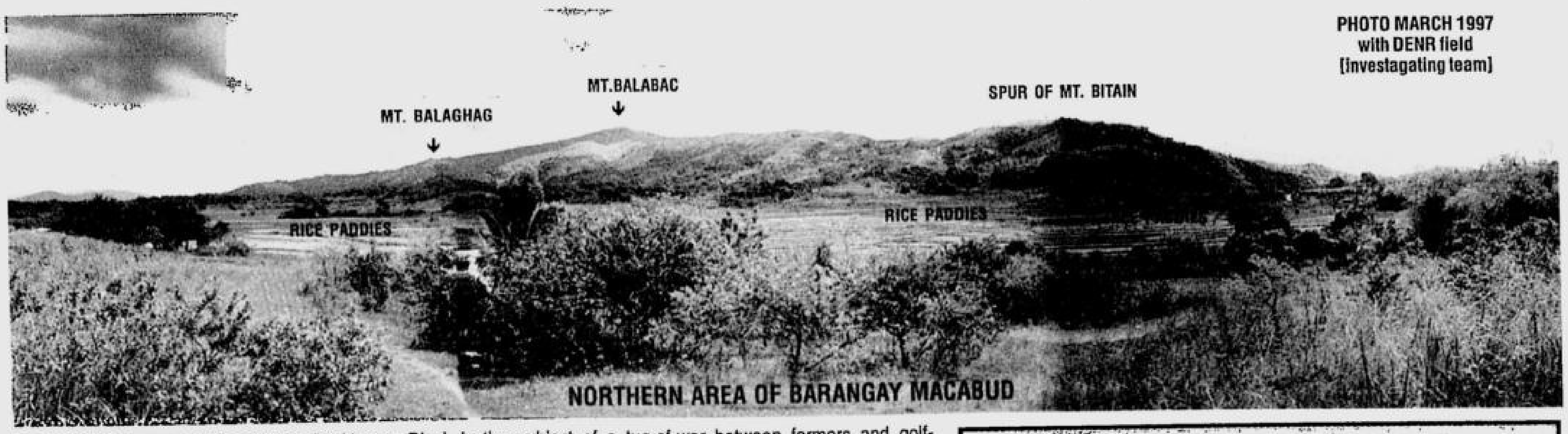
BY TESSA RELAMPAGOS SALAZAR

THERE'S a brewing battle in Barangay Macabud, and it's between developers of a 141-hectare golf course in Capitol Hills, Quezon City and farmers of this 1,800-hectare land in Rodriguez, Rizal province.

The Macabud farmers won't take it sitting down. They have decided in a Jan. 7 meeting to file a case in the Ombudsman against Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Horacio Morales for manifest partiality under the graft and corrupt practices act. Morales, according to Barangay Macabud farmer leader Elvira "Ka Elvie" Baladad, decided on Nov. 15 last year that the 124 hectares in Macabud being applied for exemption by Capitol Golf through lawyer Matias Defensor is not coverable by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

"The farmers were put at risk because Morales based it on DOJ opinion 44. DOJ opinion 44 states that all the areas classified as commercial, residential and industrial prior to the enactment of Republic Act 6657, or CARP law, are exempted from CARP coverage. But Macabud had not been classified as residential, commercial and industrial in the first place because this land was classified as deferred," said Ka Elvie in an interview with the INQUIRER.

The entire Barangay Macabud, according to Ka Elvie, was within the Deferred Land Use Zone even prior to the June 15, 1988 enactment of RA 6657. From a legal standpoint, she said, the word "deferred" meant it neither falls under any classification.



PROMISING Barangay Macabud in Rodriguez, Rizal, is the subject of a tug-of-war between farmers and golf-course developers. Whose side is the government on?

Farmer leaders previously argued that the Sangguniang Bayan of Rodriguez had already reclassified the land use of the barangay from "deferred" to "agricultural" as reflected in the Strategic Agricultural and Fisheries Development Zone Map of Rodriguez pursuant to RA 8435, or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

Barangay Macabud farmers also had a pending motion for reconsideration. The Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board assured them that the motion for reconsideration would be decided by its commissioners. However, while awaiting for the HLURB decision, Morales, already had decided against the farmers last Nov. 15.

"In spite of the fact that the Estrada administration was saying it is instituting reforms, what is happening is the opposite," Ka Elvie lamented.

The issue may seem like a simple land feud among farmers and corporations, but the implications of this struggle would ultimately affect residents of the entire Metro Manila area, Ka Elvie stressed.

Rice, root crops, fruit-bearing trees such as mangoes, bananas, guavas, star apples, citrus and vegetables such as sitaw, baguio beans and seasonal crops are grown in fertile Macabud. Farmers would then supply these crops to nearby markets in Quezon City.

Barangay Macabud is also within the La Mesa Watershed Area. It is the source of 86-million liters of water sustaining the needs of Metro Manila residents every day. The volume of water in Udiongan river, which embraces the western flank of Barangay Macabud, had led the MWSS to build the Alat Diversion Dam in 1962 to divert its waters to the La Mesa reservoir complex which sustains the water needs of the entire Metro Manila area.

A barangay captain complained, "*Bakit mo pandidilig ng damo yung* 86-million liters of water *na dapat inumin ng tao ng* Metro Manila? (Why should drinking water for Metro Manilans be used to water golf lawns?). This is the only barangay which supplies 86-million liters of water every day directly to the La Mesa dam reservoir."

Macabud farmers say the development of the 141-hectare golf course in the heart of Barangay Macabud is somehow connected with Ayala Land Inc.'s deal with Capitol Hills. The deal will pave the way for ALI's expansion of Ayala Heights by getting the frontline of adjacent Capitol Golf. Thus, a portion of Capitol will be used to put up ALI's residential gateway to the North. In return, Ayala would develop the golf property in Macabud. Ka Elvie disclosed that Ayala is set to create a 36-hole championship course—amid the farmlands of Macabud.

LAS PIÑAS LAND DISPUTE

Espinosas strike Firestone for muddling possession issue

THE ALLEGED original owners of more than 75 hectares of a 99-hectare property in Las Piñas City have accused their opponents of muddling the issue on possession by unduly invoking court rulings which they were never a party to.

Lawyers Sabino Padilla Jr. and Eduardo P. Lizares, representing the Espinosas, asked the Supreme Court not to allow "Firestone Ceramic Inc. to muddle the issue of title involved in this case."

Owned by Chinese businessman Mariano Nocom, Firestone is claiming ownership of 18 hectares of that property located in Barangay Tindig na Mangga, Las Piñas City.

The lawyers noted that for the first time in the long duration of the case, Firestone claims that the heirs of Benito Gonzales, from whom it bought the property, have been in possession of the land since 1917 and cites as evidence a previous decision of the Court of Appeals on their ejectment case against a group of military officers.

Asking the Supreme Court that they be allowed to comment on the matter, the Espinosas' lawyers said "it is a very elementary rule in procedure, mandated by the requirements of due process, that one who is not impleaded in a case cannot be affected by the dispositions made therein."

Firestone lawyers raised that CA ruling on the ejectment case in a bid to debunk the Espinosas' claim that they had been in actual possession of the disputed property since 1956 and that they even secured it with hollow blocks fence.

However, the Espinosas' lawyers maintained that this claim was based on "indubitable evidence," saying: "Private petitioners (Firestone) have not refuted the fact that the Espinosas and Peltan (Development Inc.) have erected a concrete hollow block fence enclosing the entire party; that the Espinosas have been paying realty taxes since 1956 when they acquired the property from Veronica Gana, the daughter of the original registered owners, that the private petitioners themselves have admitted that they could not enter into possession of the subject property because the property was possessed by the Espinosas and Peltan."

Moreover, the Espinosas' lawyers described Firestone's claim (based upon supposed possession of the property by Benito Gonzales since 1917) as misplaced and erroneous, saying:

"Private petitioners' outlandish claim of possession supposedly emanating from 1917 cannot override the final and binding effect of the decree of registration issued in LRC Case No. 672, which decree of registration has the effect of foreclosing any and all prior claims on the land subject matter thereof."

They cited various other cases that "stand for the proposition that any supposed right or claim of Benito Gonzales emanating since 1917— assuming, without conceding, that he indeed had such right—or of any other person for that matter existing prior to the time the decree was issued, was foreclosed and extinguished by the decree of registration issued in favor of the spouses Lorenzo Gana and Maria Juliana Carlos in 1928."

The lawyers further said that decree of registration (OCT) 4216, from which the titles of the Espinosas, Peltan and other individual owners have been derived, has been affirmed four times by the Supreme Court as valid and genuine.

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VISAYAS DEALERS: COCINA Y BAÑO 1445 Velez St., Cebu City Tels.: (032) 254-5113; 255-4258 • ALENORS HARDWARE & CONST. SUPPLY Magsaysay Blvd., Calbayog City Tel.: (055) 209-1534 •NORTH & SOUTH BUILDERS Centro Maximo Bldg., Uptown D. Jakosalem St. Cebu City Tel.. (032) 255-7325 • WINEGARD MKTG # 41 Ledesma St., Iloilo City Tels.: (033) 337--8853; 336-3182 • UY MATIAO HARDWARE Perdices St. Dumaguete City Tels.: (035) 225-4784, 225-4786 • BANILAD CEBU TRADE CENTER Banilad, Cebu City Tels.: (032) 232-6168, 232-6162 • PACIFIC HOME DEPOT 9 Summit Bldg. Gonzaga St., Bacolod City Tels.: (034) 433-3291, 435-0861to 64 REJOICE HARDWARE Hermic Bldg. Cervantes St. Dumaguete City (035) 325-1836, 422-6762 • MULTI L&A ENT. Valena Ext. Iloilo City (033) 337-8853, 336-3182

PALAWAN: • MIDTOWN SALES # 195 Rizal Avenue, Puerto Princesa Tel.: (048) 433-7501

MINDANAO DEALERS: • CAGAYAN UNIVERSAL HARDWARE # 108 Gomez St., Cagayan De Oro City Tels.: (088) 857-4252, 856-6145 •DENNIS HARDWARE GL Bldg., La Purissima St., Zamboanga City Tel.: (062) 9911187 •MM MARBLE & CONSTRUCTION SUPPLY J.P. Laurel Ave. Bajada, Davao City Tel.: (082) 226-4345 • DECO ARTS MKTG. Magsaysay Ave., Davao City Tel.: (082) 221-0525 • DECO ARTS MKTG. Quimpo Blvd. Ecoland, Davao City Tels.: (082) 296-0746 to 49; 297-2023 • CITI HARDWARE 242 J.P. Laurel Ave. Davao City Tel.: (082) 227-8845 • FLOOR TO CEILING HARDWARE #61 Fernandez Hermanas Bldg., Davao City Tels.: (082) 221-2303; 221-232336-37 • TRUST HARDWARE Monteverde St., Davao City Tels.: (082) 221-0348, 221-0241 DADIANGAS BUILDEX CENTER Pioneer Ave., Gen. Santos City Tels.: (083) 553-3006 • HOME MATTERS MKTG. # 9 Flores Ave., Butuan city Tels.: (085) 342-5003; 342-5010 • ZC UNICON ENTERPRISES Limbros Bldg., Gen. Wood St. Zamboanga City Tel.: (062) 991-3211 • DE ORO PACIFIC TRADING Lapasan Hi-way, Cagayan De Oro City Tels.: (088) 568-1657 to 59 • NEMA ELECTRICAL & INDU7STRIAL SALES INC. Quezon Ave. cor. Labao St. Iligan City Tels.: (063) 221-2868; 221-5341 • DADIANGAS GLASS & CONST. SUPPLY Santiago Blvd. Gen. Santos City Tel. (083) 552- 2970 • BUTUAN DECOR ENTERPRISES Butuan City Tel.: (085) 342-8303 • HOME DESIGN & FURNISHING Casa Angelita Bldg. Osmeña St., Koronadal, South Cotabato Tel.: (083) 228-5486 • NATIONWIDE SALES CORP. Veterans Ave. Zamboanga City Tels.: (085) 225-5054 • SONLY BUILDERS Yap Bldg. Magsaysay Ave. Gen. Santos City Tel.: (083) 552-4796

IGNORANCE OF LAW

Creba hits BSP Governor on depositors' aliases

THE CHAMBER of Real Estate and Builders' Associations (Creba) today joined the call for Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura to resign for being "either ignorant or contemptuous of the law" and his "guesswork management" of interest rate policy.

The BSP governor's insistence that there is no law prohibiting bank depositors from using fictitious names, despite his awareness of the provisions of the Revised Penal Code and Commonwealth Act 142, should speak for itself, Creba said.

CA 142 and the Revised Penal Code are laws of general application, Creba said, and their prohibition against the use of aliases applies to bank depositors as well.

BSP Circular 251, which bans bank accounts under fictitious names, Creba said, is itself not the source of the prohibition, independent of CA 142 and the Revised Penal Code as the BSP governor apparently believes.

Creba said this regulation is merely in implementation of these laws, and the violation thereof is accordingly punishable under said laws.

This ignorance or utter lack of respect for the law on the part of the BSP governor is not surprising, Creba said, as this has been manifested before in the non-implementation of the provision of Republic Act 7835 mandating the use for social housing of the banks' residual agri-agra credit allocation.

Creba revealed that in the Economic Coordinating Council's consultation meeting on the shelter finance system sometime last year, in response to Creba's call for the BSP to operationalize said provision, the BSP governor stated that "no one can dictate upon the banks how to use their lending funds."

Creba also said the BSP's "guesswork" approach to interest rate policy has thrown the already crippled economy into a tailspin, when it abruptly raised interest rates in an attempt to arrest the peso depreciation which, as the BSP had admitted, was due to political and external factors beyond its control.

And now, Creba said, the BSP governor in a recent news report claims that interest rates cannot be brought down to the pre-"juetengate" level because the fundamentals have changed.

Creba said it is precisely the BSP's act of abruptly raising interest rates, which have caused the fundamentals to change, in terms of a jacked-up inflation rate due to the instant sharp rise in the business sector's cost of borrowings, which in turn triggered a price spiral of all goods and services.

In a recent statement, Creba said, the BSP governor now claims that changes in its overnight rates have nothing to do with the peso rate as the latter's movement is a "knee-jerk" reaction, Creba said.

Such being the case, Creba said, there appears to be no compelling reason for the BSP's reluctance to effect an immediate lump-sum reduction of interest rates to pre-"juetengate" levels, other than the vague excuse offered by some economists of the Bankers' Association of the Philippines that this would do more harm than good.

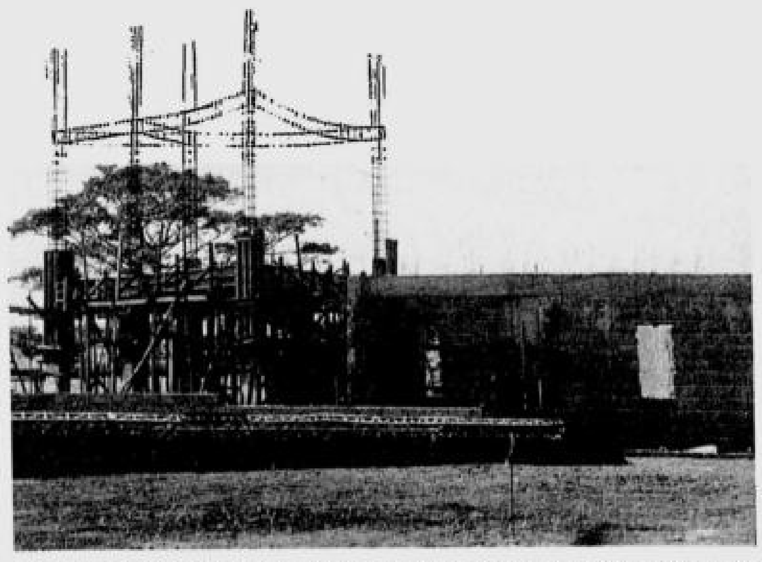
The economy cannot do any worse, but certainly can do better, if interest rates are immediately restored to the October levels, as this would bring instant relief not only to all borrowing sectors but to consumers as well, Creba said.

Creba said it is understandable for the banks to resist a reduction in interest rates despite their pronouncements to the contrary, since they continue to derive windfall profits from their act of raising the rates on loans already contracted and outstanding prior to "juetengate."

Statistics from the high interest rate regimes of 1983, 1990 and 1997 clearly show that while the rest of the economy was collapsing due to the high cost of borrowing, the banking sector on the other hand remained highly profitable, Creba said.

It is tragic that the BSP under Governor Buenaventura's leadership continues to be patently biased in favor of the banking sector at the expense of the entire economy when, under its charter and the General Banking Act, it is supposed to ensure that the banking system effectively serves as an instrument for economic development and growth, Creba added.

In view of all these, Creba said, the BSP governor and the rest of the Monetary Board should have the decency to resign and give way to a more enlightened leadership.



LAGUNA BELAIR CHURCH UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Structural works are now fully ongoing for a new Catholic church at the Laguna BelAir, the pioneering township project of housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The church, situated in phase 5 of the township near the Laguna BelAir commercial center, is envisioned to be a steel and stained glass structure featuring a modern architectural design by Jorge Yulo & Associates amid spacious and landscaped surroundings. Development commenced in the last quarter of 2000 and full completion is programmed within the year.

Concrete Ventures Group modernizes Batangas plant

Concrete Ventures Group, through Executive Vice President Alvin Judd M. Gorayeb, announced recently the completion of the modernization of its manufacturing plant in San Pioquinto, Malvar, Batangas.

Concrete Ventures Group Inc., which manufacturers and markets the floor and roof system under the C-Joist brand, is the leading joist manufacturer in the Philippines.

Since the plant began operating in 1992, the CVG plant has undergone several phases of upgrading and modernization. The most recent phase was completed last December 2000.

It now boasts of a production capacity of one million linear meters a year.

For the last nine years now, Concrete Ventures Group's plant at the Dolores Industrial Park in Batangas, has been manufacturing the precast, prestressed reinforced concrete joists.

The C-Joist product is used in the construction of a wide range of residential and commercial buildings, schools, offices, hospitals, shopping malls, condominiums, parking buildings and warehouses.

C-Joist is marketed nationwide by a network of dealers in Cebu City, Balocod City, Davao City and Cagayan de Oro City.

C-Joist is a popular flooring and roofing slab construction system because of the big savings it earns for the owners, builders and constructors through fast construction or completion of projects, thus saving on labor costs; minimizes formworks and the use of concrete aggregate materials.

The manufacturer's main office is at-the CVG Centre in Cubao, 726-9541 to 42, with e-mail at cjoist@info.com.ph.

Record financing for mass housing bared

THE GOVERNMENT housing agencies engaged in the Estrada administration's centerpiece program of socialized housing have poured P9.304 billion for end-user and developmental financing. This was revealed yesterday by Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Leonora V. de Jesus.

Under the arrangement, the housing requirements of members of the Armed Forces, the National Police and Pag-Ibig members will be served by the Pag-Ibig Fund.

Teachers and other government employees will be served by the Government Service Insurance System while trade union members, overseas Filipino workers and other private sector workers will source their housing funds from the Social Security System.

De Jesus recalled that in May last year, she signed an agreement with the SSS, Department of Labor, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Home Guaranty Corp. and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines establishing a P3-billion direct-lending facility for low-cost and socialized housing loan packages.

One of the requirements for the prospective beneficiaries is membership in registered workers organizations.

Under the scheme, the SSS will provide the required 70 percent financing for the cost of the housing package while the Home Development Mutual Fund will provide the required amount for the equity portion of the loan under the multi-purpose loan for its members.

To date, of the P37-billion commitment of the various funders, such as the Development Bank, Land Bank, Pag-Ibig Fund, SSS and GSIS, some P8.1 billion has been spent for end-user financing and P1.159 for developmental financing.

De Jesus said the HUDCC had to ensure that the housing agencies would not end up with inventories of unoccupied units.

This was done, she added, by implementing the salary deduction scheme, lease-purchase agreement and contract-to-sell arrangements in lieu of mortgage origination to ensure good collection.

In addition, the HUDCC chief said they had to adopt a strong warranty system, such as the buy-back mechanism on the part of developers. The HUDCC also supported the initiative of the private sector to set up a guaranty fund to provide stand-by back-up cash-flow guaranty protection to financial institutions and lending windows, the presidential housing adviser continued.

The back-up facilities are to be used when the developer fails to buy back defaulting buyers required under the two-year seasoning period, De Jesus concluded.

Bathing in the lap of luxury with Delta Synergy

A BALANCE of style and comfort is what makes a luxurious bathroom. One must have a clear idea on what fixtures you actually need then synergize it to your own personal taste in design. You need not spend too much on expensive bathroom items such as variable-jet whirlpool baths, adjustable showers or soaking tubs if it does not suit your lifestyle. The important thing is, your bathroom serves as your special place for relaxation as well as the reflection of your own sense of style. To create that lavish atmosphere in the bathroom, Delta Synergy, Delta Faucet's latest European line, gives you some innovative suggestions.

- **Play up your bathroom tiles.** Utilizing broken pieces of china, pottery or tiles can be creatively used to decorate your bathroom. Trace your desired pattern on the bathroom wall using a pencil and carbon paper. Choose the pieces of china or pottery that fits the pattern. Stick them with tile cement then seal the gaps with tile grout to create beautiful mosaic designs.
- **Invest on high-quality bathroom fixtures.** Faucets, shower heads and handles are the "jewelry" of the bathroom. These fixtures are the focal point of bathrooms overall design. It is a must therefore to consider faucets that provide both the esthetic and functional qualities like the Delta Synergy line. This European-inspired faucet line is equipped with Delta Faucets best features; a single handle that dispenses hot and cold water, a patented stainless steel valve to prevent leakage, and characterized by sleek, curving lines that gives you the freedom to reinvent the look of your bathroom without replacing the fixtures.
- **Glass containers can be decorative space savers.** Ordinary jars or glass container with stoppers can add character into your bathroom. Paint small pictures of flowers or stick ribbons, pieces of cloth and silk flowers on its lid. They can also serve as a storage to organize your favorite scents, soaps and hair accessories that otherwise create clutter in the bathroom.
- **Scented candles are a luxurious feast for the senses.** Not only scented candles of various shapes and colors provide accent to a drab bathroom. They can also aid in giving you a relaxing and soothing bath when you use it. Choose scents that will help you achieve the mood you want such as orange scents to ward off stress or jasmine for inner peace, etc.
- **Embroidered Towels.** Add a personal touch in your bathroom by sewing on your family's initials or monograms you can choose from a thousand designs found in hobby shops or sewing books. If you're not skilled in the art of needlework, you can always have them made in stores that specializes in embroidering names or designs.

Realtors conduct CEP seminar for the year

THE PASAY-MAKATI Realtors Board Inc. will conduct for its members, associates and friends the "Ultimate Continuing Education Program (CEP)" Opportunity on two Saturdays: Jan. 13 (8-hour CEP credits) and Jan. 20 ((8-hour CEP credits) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The comprehensive program will be held at the 2nd Floor, Claro Room, Max's Restaurant, Greenbelt Park, Makati City.

Interesting subjects to be discussed include property management, land title fraud, real estate taxation, contract documentation and registration, laws relating to real estate development, property development, legal aspects of sale, lease and mortgage, and appraisal fundamentals for real estate brokers.

This seminar aims to address the problem of renewal or issuance of new real estate brokers license for the year 2001.

Interested parties may call up the PMRB secretariat at 893-0569 and 893-0585 or e-mail at pmrb@ broline.com. Or visit their office for early reservation at Unit 502-P Parking Building, Cityland 10, H.V. dela Costa St., Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

All licensed brokers, who have not yet complied with the required hours for renewal of licenses, is invited to attend. This two-day series of seminars satisfies the 16 hours requirement for CEP accreditation necessary for license renewal.

More construction groups join Worldbex

AS the 6th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition (Worldbex 2001) sets the stage for its biggest trade show ever, the excitement is mounting among foreign and local associations involved in the construction industry, judging from the snowballing of support that the annual construction super-expo is getting from these groups.

Worldbex founding president Joseph Ang has announced that at least 22 local organizations and exhibitors from the United States, Europe, Asia, Canada, South America, Africa and Australia have sounded off their intention to participate in Worldbex 2001, which will be held at the enormous World Trade Center Metro Manila on March 14 to 18.

"We attribute the high turnout of local associations supporting Worldbex 2001 to the fact that this yearly trade show not only provides the ultimate venue for showcasing goods and services, it also gives industry associations the best opportunity to seek foreign partnerships and wider international networks," Ang said.

Organized by Worldbex Services International together with the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers and the Filipino Professional Architects, Worldbex 2001 enjoys the full support of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association Inc., Construction Project Management Association of the Philippines, Council of Engineering Consultants of the Philippines, Society of Philippine Electrical Contractors & Suppliers Inc., Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Philippines, Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers, Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers, Metro Manila Builders & Developers Association, Construction Industry Authority of the Philippines and Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Other industry associations backing the construction super-expo are the Philippine Association of Landscape Architects, Philippine Institute of Environmental Planners, Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines, Philippine Society of Sanitary Engineers, Adhesive Manufacturers' Association of the Philippines, United Painting Contractors Association of the Philippines, National Master Plumbers Association of the Philippines, PVC Pipe Industries Association Inc., Hardware Consolidated Inc., Philippine Society of Ventilating, Air-conditioning & Refrigerating Engineers, Philippine Association of Building Administrators and Ceramics Association of the Philippines.

Industry insiders anticipate that Worldbex 2001 will be the biggest ever construction exposition in the country in terms of foreign participation. This early, Worldbex has renewed its partnerships with the United States Commercial Service and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, ensuring the participation of American and European construction firms in the trade show. The United States alone is expected to bring in more than 30 companies for Worldbex 2001.

Worldbex is emerging as one of the most sought-after construction expositions in Asia and the world. Notwithstanding the political and economic crisis the country is now experiencing, the Philippines remains attractive to foreign investors on account of the country's efforts to liberalize trade and its continuing economic expansion.

Urban Institute holds realty lecture series

THE URBAN Institute of Real Estate will conduct real estate lectures on Jan. 20 and 21 at the National Irrigation Administration, Edsa, Quezon City. The lecture series, which is accredited by the Department of Trade and Industry for 16-hour continuing education program (CEP), is intended for aspiring real estate developers, investors, financiers, owners and realty brokers for the renewal of their license.

The topics are:

- Jan. 20, Fundamentals of real estate finance—financing concepts and definitions, risk analysis, financial intermediaries, the primary and secondary markets, interest rate determination, the financing process, making financing decisions, installment sale financing, and other financing methods.
- Basics of real estate investments—investor's objectives, rate of return analysis, risk analysis, cash flow analysis and making investment decisions.
- Subdivision laws, rules and procedures—Presidential Decree 957, Batas Pambansa 220, Republic Act 7279, Maceda Law, Executive Order 90, PD 1216 and Minimum HLURB Standards for PD 957 and BP 220.
- Fundamentals of property development—evaluating land potential, residential subdivision development, subdivision development costs, commercial development, industrial development, condominium development, development process and feasibility criteria.
- Jan. 21, Introduction to property management—the management function, management objectives, organization and designations, management contract, leases, contracts and tenant selection, property maintenance and insurance.
- Syndications and joint ventures for real estate projects—participation mortgages, syndications, joint ventures, reasons, examples, organizational forms, the developer's role and the lender's role.
- Contract documentation and registration—important provisions for contract of agency, sale, lease and mortgage and others, sample of legal forms, notarization and registration requirements.
- Real estate networking and how to start and manage a successful real estate office—scope of business operations, organizational structure, the office manager, recruitment techniques, advancement and career path programs, commission structures, awards and other incentives, multiple listing and franchising.

A special seminar on foreclosure will cover its prevention and remedies on Jan. 27—do lenders really want to foreclose? Periods of foreclosure action, options of borrowers during default period, steps to prevent foreclosure, remedies before and during default, remedies when foreclosed and effective financial techniques that save collaterals.

Civil engineer Enrico S. Cruz, the main lecturer, has more than three decades of working experience in engineering, construction, real estate and education. He placed first in the real estate appraisers board examinations in 1994 and 8th in the real estate brokers board examination in 1988. He is also a licensed real estate consultant and real estate fellow. Urban Institute may be reached at 9 Kapitan Sindo St., Jesus de la Peña, Marikina City, 681-0928, and telefax 681-0953 or at e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph. Cruz is also president of United Realty Brokers and Appraisers Network, and the chief operating officer of the First Amson Realty Development Corp., engaged in housing and land development. He authored the "Comprehensive Notes and Reviewer for Real Estate Brokers" and "Mastering the Real Estate Brokers' Exams."

Crown Asia-South offers value-for-more-money homes

CROWN Asia is geared toward a common concern of developing urban housing communities that enhance the lifestyle and living conditions of every homeowner.

As a pioneer master planner community developer in the country, Crown Asia is committed to the development of an upgraded line of residential community projects.

Each housing community is a combination of strategic location and wisely planned land use. It offers diverse opportunities integrated into a single, self-contained, environmentally responsible community.

And entering the world of technology, Crown Asia-South recently launched Crown Asia Scoop E, On-line News. Scoop E provides online news about the company's projects and the latest developments in its marketing. The most unique feature of Scoop E is the Home Matrix, where clients are given advice about the home package. This means Crown Asia can be accessed through www.crownasia.com.ph or through its subsidiaries namely, www.asiaplusprop.com; www.peakmakati.com; www.peakmanila.com; www.britannymarketing.com.

And in five active years in the real estate business, Crown Asia-South spearheads the dictum: "Value-for- money homes." The housing packages are affordable—each fitting the budget of clients. And as the company marks its 5th anniversary, Crown Asia participated in the donation of housing materials and labor to Habitat Philippines.

In her speech during the turnover, Crown Asia-South CEO Rosario Javier stressed Crown Asia is committed to build more homes for the Filipinos.

People, Events & Products

REZ GOPEZ-SINDAC, Editor

Seminar-conference aims to professionalize management of Philippine private schools

THE COORDINATING Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), in cooperation with the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) will be conducting a Young Executives National Conference on Jan. 11-12, 2001, at the PHINMA Development Center in Tagaytay City. The conference will revolve around the theme, "Succession Planning for Professionalism in Philippine Private Educational Institutions."

The primary objective of the seminar-conference is to increase the participants' understanding of the management theories and practical applications involved in enabling educational institutions to make the transition from congregationally-managed and family-run companies into professional corporations. The secondary objective is to provide an environment and opportunity for strong networking on a nationwide basis and the development of linkages among the younger administrators of the participating private schools.

The conference will start with registration on Jan. 11 at 9 a.m. and will end on Jan. 12 at 1:30 p.m. The keynote address on "Professionalism in Philippine Educational Institutions" will be delivered by former Education secretary Armand V. Fabella who is currently the chair of the board of trustees of Jose Rizal University.

The other featured speakers and their respective papers are as follows: Felipe B. Alfonso, co-vice chair of the board of trustees of the Asian Institute of Management on "Professionalism and Succession in the Family-run Corporation"; Panfilo O. Domingo, chair of the board of trustees of the University of the East on "Making the Transition to the Professional Corporation: Challenges for Educational Institutions"; Karen T. Tamayo, chancellor of the University of Perpetual Help System on "Professionalism and Succession in the Family-run Educational Institution"; Eulalia H. Lim, chair of the board of trustees of the DE La Salle University System, and Rev. Father Tamerlane R. Lana, OP, rector of the University of Sto. Tomas, on "Professionalism and Succession in the Congregationally-Managed Educational Institution."

The conference will also feature a workshop to be supervised by Dr. Roberto T. Borromeo, president of the Fund for Assistance to Private Education. The purpose of the workshop is to give the participants an opportunity to discuss the issues and concerns that are unique to the various types of private schools (non-stock, non-profit sectarian schools; proprietary schools; and foundation-type institutions), particularly with reference to the challenges confronting the Philippines' young, third-generation school executives in managing all the problems involved in succession, toward ensuring professionalism and efficiency in school operations.

The conference-seminar was managed by a steering committee composed of the following: Dr. Maria Lim-Ayuyao, COCOPEA president, chair; Dr. Edilberto de Jesus, vice president of the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities, member; Dr. Roberto T. Borromeo, FAPE president, member.

The working committees were chaired by Vincent Fabella, vice president for academic affairs of Jose Rizal University. The chairpersons of the specific committees are as follows: physical arrangements, food and lodging, Dr. Jose Paolo Campos, president of Emilio Aguinaldo College; program organization, Vincent Fabella and Tina Bate, guidance director of Jose Rizal University; invitations, Dr. Ma. Lim-Ayuyao, CEU executive vice president for academic affairs, and Carmelita Echauz-Lao, CEU vice president for business development; transportation, Mariano Piamonte, CEAP executive director; reservations and registration, Carol Porio, FAPE director for scholarships and externally funded programs; Greg Pascua, PACU executive director and Marie Zaldivia, PACU executive secretary; publicity and documentation, Bettina Olmedo, FAPE director for institutional networking and development; sponsorship committee, Roberto Laurel, executive vice president of Lyceum.

The sponsors of the seminar-conference dinner are the Technolgoical Institute of the Philippines and Globe Telecommunications.

The young school executives who will introduce the speakers are Dr. Jose Paolo Campos, Vincent Fabella; Elizabeth Lahoz, vice president of the Technological Institute of the Philippines; Mariano Jhocson IV, vice president for administration of the National University; Roberto Laurel; and Guiana Romero-Salas, trustee of the Far Eastern University.

KLM
Dutch Airlines

MARIO'S PROMO WINNER

Mario's Restaurant (Ayala Center, Ortigas Center and Tomas Morato in Quezon City) awarded the raffle draw winners of its promo "Festival de Comida Española." One winner won a round-trip ticket to Spain for two from KLM Royal Dutch Airlines. Three winners won packages for two at Club Panoly Resort in Boracay. Shown is Anna Marie de Chavez (second from left), winner of trip to Spain. With her are (from left) Michael Go of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Mario Benitez, Jr. of the Mario's Group, Nannette T. Morato of The Mario's Group and Timmy Naval of The Mario's Group.

MILO RAFFLE DRAW

MILO the Olympic Energy Drink recently held the MILO Go for Gold raffle draw. The winners of the trip for two to Sydney, Australia were Juanita C. Navarro of Cagayan de Oro City and Nelia S. Gal of Samar. Present in the draw are (from left) Charmaine Campañer, associate account group manager of Publicis-AMA; Ferdie Celemen, Nestlé sampling coordinator; Arnie Atienza, BFAD representative; Juan Miguel Alvarez and Eugene David, MILO brand managers.

COOLING THE TENT

Concepcion-Carrier Air Conditioning Company (CCAC), manufacturer of Carrier, the country's most popular air conditioner brand was recently tapped by Nation Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) to handle the air conditioning requirements for the NBC Tent located at the Bonifacio Global City. Signing the memorandum of agreement are Rafael Hechanova Jr., CCAC director for sales and marketing, and Marco Borlongan, NBC vice president and COO.

RP to host RI Asia Pacific Presidential Conference

FOR THE FIRST time in history, the Philippines will be the host of the Rotary International Asia Pacific Presidential Conference, which will be held on April 6-8, 2001, at the Manila Hotel. This was learned from Rotary International past director RIPD Rafael "Paing" Hechanova, overall chair and past district governor JL "Pete" Morales, Jr. chair of the attendance committee and immediate past chair of the Philippine College of Rotary Governors.

The conference will bring together Rotarian leaders from all over the world to discuss Rotary concerns relevant to the needs of the poor. These concerns include among others, poverty, illiteracy, crime, drug abuse and the promotion of world peace. The conference aims to create awareness on these and other humanitarian issues and inspire Rotarians to take the initiative to lead others in addressing these concerns. This is in line with the thrusts of Rotary International, which are expressed in the 2000-2001 theme "Create Awareness, Take Action." Through Rotary action on world concerns, the international service organization aims to promote world understanding and peace.

World understanding and peace are the ultimate dream of the worldwide Rotary movement. This is pursued by Rotary clubs and Rotarians through humanitarian and educational programs in Rotary's Four Avenues of Service club, vocational, community and international.

This historic RI Asia Pacific Presidential Conference 2001will be attended by no less than Rotary International president Frank Devlyn. It will be the only Presidential Conference of RI president Frank in the Asia Pacific region and one of the only four in the world. Rotarians in the ten districts in the Philippines are invited to attend.

HONDA DONATES ENGINE SET

Honda Cars Philippines, Inc and Honda Motor Co., Ltd. officials recently turned over to Don Bosco Manpower Automotive Section a DOHC VTEC engine and transmission set. The donation was given during the opening ceremony of the Asia Oceania Technicians Contest held Nov. 26, 2000. Present at the turnover ceremony are (from left) Takashi Tsuchiya, general manager of HM/ Asia Oceania Service Department, Automobile Service Division; Bro. Louie Parolin, executive director of Don Bosco Manpower and Technical Center, Luzon; Kenji Otaka, president and general manager of Honda Cars Philippines, Inc.; and Masaru Shiga, AVP-HCPI Service Dept.

ALCATEL SHARES WITH ORPHANS

Alcatel, world leader in voice and data communications solutions, played Santa Claus to the orphans of the White Cross Children's Home at the recent Christmas party of Alcatel in the Philippines. Company officers and staff generously donated toys, clothes and food items in manifestation of Alcatel's corporate citizenship during this holiday season. Shown is Alcatel in the Philippines president and country senior officer Buddy F. Gomez handing out gifts to the children of White Cross.

RAINTREE PARTNERS-ICEC LAND DEAL

Raintree Partners, a property development and management company specializing in "niche" market hotels, retail centers and food parks and ICEC Land, owner and developer of LKG Tower at 6801 Ayala Avenue, Makati, recently signed an agreement giving Raintree management rights to Food Odyssey, a state-of-the-art food court located at the 11th floor of LKG Tower. Signing the agreement are (seated, from left) ICEC Land project director Bernard Loh, owner's representative Audrey Shih and Annabella and Tom Wisniewski, president and chair of Raintree Partners, respectively. Also in photo are Timothy Footer and Peter Small, senior negotiator and managing director, respectively, of Jones Lang La Salle, sole marketing consultant and property manager for ICEC Land.

BITS & Clips

HR book launched

AZANZA

SEASONED HR practitioner and training consultant, Prof. Patrick Alain Azanza launched his new book on Human Resources Management at the University of the Philippines Diliman last Dec. 26, 2000. The book is envisioned to serve as a textbook in HRM courses and as reference material for HR practitioners and employees in both the public and private sectors. It was published by the JMC Inc. and distributed by Goodwill Bookstore. Azanza who has served as director of the UP System HRD and as a professor at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations has written various articles and books on managing people and labor relations.

De Rueda clan reunion

THE DE RUEDA clan will hold its annual reunion on Jan. 14, 2001 at Barangay Baloc, Barangay Hall, Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija after km. 138 Maharlika National Highway from Manila. This was announced by Ramon Padolina and lawyer Ernesto Rueda of the De Rueda clan Balik-Tipon family reunion. Hosting the Balik-Tipon year affair is councilor Rolando (Willy) Balajonda and relatives. For more information call Ernesto Rueda at 740-0743; Ramon Rueda Padolina, 936-7805; Alfredo Rueda, 292-5187; Eddie Rueda, 445-6040, and in the provinces, Rene Rueda, 044-486-0168, Gapan, Nueva Ecija; Efren Rueda and Elsie Magsino, San Miguel, Bulacan; Peter Rueda and Rancy Rueda Garcia, both of Plaridel, Bulacan; and Isabel Guieb of Baliwag, Bulacan.

CBA CONCLUDED

China Banking Corporation has concluded negotiations on a two-year P182.2 million Collective Bargaining Agreement package. Present during the signing ceremony are (seated, from left) China Bank management lawyer Marcial dela Fuente, VP for HRD Remedios C. Cruz, EVP & COO Ricardo R. Chua, chair of the board Gilbert U. Dee, president and CEO Peter S. Dee, China Banking Corporation Employees' Association (CBCEA) president Elsa A. Laporga and union lawyer Carlo Domingo. Standing are China Bank senior officers and union representatives.

Pampers - MCN
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NURSING SCHOLARSHIP

PAMPERS-MCNAP SCHOLARS FETED

Pampers and MCNAP's scholar for School Year 2001-2001 affirm their commitment to the Aral-Alaga Scholarship Program which will help them fulfill their ambition to become maternal and pediatric nurses after three years. Inset photo shows MCNAP's Rose delas Alas, head of the scholarship committee, as she delivers an inspirational message to the new scholars.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that estate of the late BLAS LARA was extrajudicially settled w/ waiver of rights per Doc.2271 Pg393 BkXIX Series 2000 Atty. Ernesto M. Prias of Antipolo City PDI-Jan.9,16 & 23,2001

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Eligio Cordero was extrajudicially settled among his heirs per Doc. 31, Pg. 7 Bk. II Series of 2000 Atty. Carlo G. Castillo.
(PDI-Dec. 26, Jan 2, 9, 2000)

An international company is looking for a dynamic and self-motivated person to fill this position:

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PRE/POST-QUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

December 26, 2000

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

NOTICE is hereby given that this Office desires to enter into CONTRACT for furnishing of labor, materials, equipment and expertise necessary for:

1. CONTINUATION OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (San Marcelino Campus)
2. CONSTRUCTION/REPAIR OF ROAD (San Marcelino Campus)
3. CONTINUATION OF ROAD NETWORK (Porac Campus)

Interested contractors are invited to prequalify. Deadline for prequalification is on **January 15, 2001.**

Pre-bid conference is scheduled on **January 17, 2001** at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the 2nd Floor, Administration Building, San Marcelino campus.

Sealed bid on forms to be furnished by the WLAC-PBAC Office at the San Marcelino campus will be received not later than **January 24, 2001** at 10:00 AM and then publicly opened on the same day in the presence of qualified bidders.

For particulars, re: proposal bid forms and other prerequisites may be obtained from this Office. Only those prequalified contractors can participate in the bidding.

All bids shall be prepared in accordance with the guidelines prescribed under P.D. 1594.

This Office reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein and to accept such as may be considered advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **PROF. BENJAMIN R. CAPISTRANO**
Chairman

NOTED:

(Sgd.) **DAVID B. ANDRES, Ph.D.**
President

(PDI – Jan. 5, 9 & 12, 2001)

INQUIRER TRIVIA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Pen power

Q. Who originated the expression, 'The pen is mightier than the sword?'

A. The English writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton in 1839. In Act II of his play *Richelieu*, Cardinal Richelieu learns of a plot against him contrived by a friend and confidant, the monk Joseph. Since as a priest he cannot challenge the monk to physical combat, Richelieu issued a written statement which contains the following: *Beneath the rule of men entirely great, / The pen is mightier than the sword.* However, Bulwer-Lytton was not the first to have the thought. The great Greek poet Euripides, who died about 406 B.C., said, 'The tongue is mightier than the sword.' Also preceding Bulwer-Lytton was US president Thomas Jefferson, who in 1796 sent a letter to the English left-wing political writer Thomas Paine in which he wrote: 'Go on doing with your pen what in other times was done with the sword.'

Classified Odd. According to ancient Chinese historians, Li Po (705-62 A.D.), probably the greatest poet China has produced, died because of his dedication to his twin poetic themes of wine and love. He is said to have drowned after leaning out of a boat in a drunken attempt to kiss the reflection of the moon.

For the Record. The patterns of ridges and grooves on the fingertips of identical twins are similar—but not identical. Everyone's fingerprints are different from everyone else's. Your prints remain the same all your life; unless the bottom layer of the epidermis (outermost skin layer) is destroyed, the skin that grows back after even a serious injury shows the same pattern it did when you were born. Thus fingerprints provide a foolproof way of identifying every person.

WORD WATCH

Manicure : from the Latin *manus*, 'hand,' + *cura*, 'care.'

PDI – January 9, 2001

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HONORABLE ANITA BALBASTRO SILLA

Iloilo Provincial Board Member
Former Vice-Mayor, Oton, Iloilo

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 5, 2001

Her loving husband **Dr. Bernardo A. Silla, Sr.**; children **Bernardo Jr.**, **Barnard** and **Anna Consuelo**; brother **Dean Arturo E. Balbastro**; sister **Zenaida B. Pagtanac**; brother-in-law **Atty. Napoleon G. Pagtanac**; sister-in-law **Rosario A. Silla**; nephews, nieces and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence in Rizal Street, Oton, Iloilo.

Interment will be on January 13, 2001 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Oton Catholic Church.

One year after, we fondly remember a good man, an outstanding lawyer, and a loving father

ATTY. FILEMON "MOMOY" F. FLORES

who joined our Creator last January 9, 2000. May we request our pious readers to join us in praying for the eternal repose of his soul. Masses shall be offered today at the following churches:

1. **Christ the King Parish** 6:00 AM
   Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City
2. **St. John Bosco Parish** 6:00 PM
   A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City
3. **Santuario de San Jose** 6:15 PM
   Greenhills, Mandaluyong City

In Loving Memory
On the **First Death Anniversary** of

Our Beloved

ERNESTO "TETO" NEPOMUCENO MIRANDA

Of Sasmuan, Pampanga
January 9, 2000 - January 9, 2001

We invite all relatives, friends and pious readers to remember him in prayers. Masses will be offered today at the following churches:

Sta. Barbara Catholic Church *(Sta. Ana, California)*	5:30 p.m.
St. Peter Chanel Church *(Hawaiian Gardens, California)*	6:15 p.m.
Sta. Lucia Parish *(Sasmuan, Pampanga)*	6:00 a.m.
Lubao Parish Church *(Lubao, Pampanga)*	6:00 a.m.
Sta. Rita de Casia Parish Church *(Sta. Rita, Pampanga)*	6:00 a.m.
National Shrine of the Sacred Heart *(San Antonio Village, Makati)*	6:00 a.m.
St. Scholastica's Chapel *(Leon Guinto, Manila)*	6:15 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio Parish *(Forbes Park, Makati)*	6:15 a.m.
Santisima Trinidad Parish *(Malate, Manila)*	6:30 a.m.
St. Alphonsus de Liguori *(Magallanes Village, Makati)*	7:00 a.m.
St. Joseph the Worker Parish *(Palanan, Makati)*	7:00 a.m.
St. Vincent de Paul Parish *(Ermita, Manila)*	7:15 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish *(Pasay Road, Makati)*	7:30 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church. *(Retiro, Quezon City)*	10:00 a.m.
St. John Bosco Parish *(Pasay Road, Makati)*	12:15 p.m.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
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and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones the following establishments can help you.

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Tels. 640-2145 • 640-2975
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City
Tel. 732-0309 732 1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu
Tels 346 2543 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City Tels 231 0721, 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City
Tels (082) 227-1201 227-1258
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City Tel 894 5932 to 34
DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102, 741-5125 741-5133 • Fax No. 711-3064
F. SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City
Tels. 646-1725, 646-1730

FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
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Tels. 2812963 2813034 2810522
FUNERARIA PANGILINAN
Santo Entierro cor. P. Burgos St., Lourdes Sur, Angeles City
(045) 322 5247 (045) 888 2959
FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
No. 67 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City
Tels. 671 7909 641 1735
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Calsadang Bago Pateros Metro Manila Tels 642 6181 to 82
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Tel. 722-2730, Cell (0917) 5680136, (0917) 5680145
Manila #23 Pato St. Project 2 Quezon City Tel. 434-3258
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East Greenhills Mandaluyong City Telefax 724 4139 725 2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village Makati City Tels 852 8228 852 7284
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
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Tels 749 3679 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
296 Quezon Ave. Quezon City
Tels. 372 5084 410 9286 87
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue, 517 A Arnaiz St., Pasay City
Tels 831-3797, 844-7846, 843-1801

Our Dearly Beloved

Cesar Villalon Urbiztondo

Peacefully joined our Lord on January 7, 2001
at the age of 51.

His loving wife **Ma. Elena**; children **Bobby**, **Alvin**, **Lara**, and **Vincent**; together with brother-in-law, sisters, brother, sisters-in-law, grandmother, aunties, uncles, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 61 Blake Street, Filinvest II, Quezon City.

A Mass will be held at the Christ the King, Filinvest II, Quezon City on January 14, 2001 at 1:00 p.m. after which interment will follow at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

People, Events & Products

REZ GOPEZ-SINDAC, Editor

Y.A.B. DATO' SERI ABDULLAH AHMAD
UTY PRIME TER OF MALA
BER
Shangri-La hotel

IBERPACIFIC OFFICE IN MALAYSIA

Iberpacific Soluziona, a joint venture between Meralco and Soluziona Internacional, recently opened its office in Malaysia to strengthen its business in the Asia-Pacific region. Iberpacific is an international professional services firm offering client corporations total service in business transformation and technology management. Present at the launch of Soluziona Malaysia are (from left) Sandra Phang, marketing executive; Danny Low, business development manager; and Winnie Lam, account executive.

Manila's Perfect 10 bared

THE MANILA qualifying event of Secret's Perfect 10 search was held last Dec. 9, 2000 at the Vinzons Hall in UP Diliman to determine the Manila qualifiers for the nearing finals nights on Feb. 4, 2001 at the De La Salle Zobel Theater.

The eight Manila candidates are: Rachel Bantola, Anna Meliza Abarquez, Ma. Donna Beech, Martha Veronica Callanta, Ivy Chan, Johanna Maris Asuncion, Muriel Charm Bicol and Graciel Ann Loyola.

Only five representatives were supposed to be chosen, but Procter and Gamble considered the other three candidates for their exemplary academic standing and their above average self-confidence.

During the qualifying event, the candidates demonstrated their sense of style via mini-fashion show. The girls walked the stage clad in casual and formal wear provided by Buffalo, Flower Collection, L.A. Gear, Kickers and accessories by Marcella and Kamaru.

The day before, the candidates were submitted to a panel interview at Here's Pizza Pasta in San Juan, Manila. The board of judges, headed by P&G associate marketing manager Redge Abueva, witnessed the wit and charm of some of Manila's finest. Also that night, the girls proceeded to Hopper's Bar and Café in Malate for the talent's night presentation.

The search for the Perfect 10 Teens was launched by Secret last year to discover the new millennium's active and self-confident youth. The search gives more emphasis on talent and abilities rather than just beauty.

Now on it's second year, Secret once again traveled the different regions of the country, with the help and endorsement of the Department of Education culture and Sports, to discover a new batch of Perfect 10 Teens.

Next year, the Perfect 10 Foundation hopes to launch the search throughout Southeast Asia.

PHILIP MORRIS SPONSORS BOOK PUBLICATION

Economist Dr. Bernie Villegas (left) of the Center for Research and Communications presents a copy of his newly-published book on the Philippine economy to lawyer Renato Salud, corporate affairs director of Philip Morris Philippines, (PMPh). Titled "The Philippines at the Threshold of the Third Millennium," Villegas' book details the country's economic prospects over the next 25 years. The publication of this book is among the many socio-civic projects sponsored by PMPh, the local subsidiary of Philip Morris Companies Inc., the world's largest producer and marketer of consumer packaged goods. Looking on is PMPh business development manager Jose F. Jara.

PHOTO EXHIBIT

First Lady Dr. Loi Ejercito (center) was the guest of honor at the Philippine British Friendship Day launch of the photo exhibit depicting three centuries of historic relationships between the Philippines and Great Britain. With her are (from left) director Rodney Bell of the British Council, British ambassador Alan Collins, Mrs. Collins, president Francis C. Neri of the Philippine British Society, Col. Rey Silvestre and Arni Planco of the British Council.

MELLOW TOUCH PREMIERES 'CHICKEN RUN'

Kids of all ages recently trooped to the SM Megamall Cinema 4 for dwLL/Mellow Touch 94.7's advanced screening of clay-animation "Chicken Run." The film featured the character voices of Mel Gibson, Julia Sawalha and Miranda Richardson. The story is about the prisoner chickens of Tweedy's Farm who are trying to escape and save their lives. The premiere night was sponsored by Enchanted Kingdom, Huggies Diapers, Wyeth, Western Union, Dequadin, Quickchow Pancit Canton, Milo, Incremin, Jollibee and Bayfresh.

'The Great Italian Sale' ongoing at Linea Italia

THE LINEA Italia Group (LIG) presents "The Great Italian Sale" at all Linea Italia stores with big, big discounts on top quality Italian fashion and accessories, it was announced by group chair Freddy Panicucci.

A 30 percent discount will be given on all 2000 collections on already very low prices, thanks to LIG's special agreement with Italian suppliers. That means the lowest prices on absolutely 100 percent made in Italy fashion wear. On sale are prestigious Italian brands – Versace, V2 Classic, Gianfranco Ferre, Dolce and Gabbana, Pal Zileri, Max Mara, SportMax, Ennepi Beat, Moschino, Trussardo, Avant, Onyx, Marco Gabbriellini and Navajos, among many others.

Check out "The Great Italian Sale" at the following shops: Linea Italia 6750, Linea Italia (SM Manila, Ayala Center Cebu, SM Megamall, Alabang Town Center), Versace Jeans Couture (Greenbelt Mall), Prima Linea (Greenbelt, SM Megamall, Ayala Center Cebu), Viva (SM Megamall, SM Cebu), Linea Uomo (Alabang Town Center, Park Square 1, SM Cebu, SM Megamall); Uomo Tu (Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center Cebu) Capolinea (Greenbelt Mall, SM Cebu).

Also participating are members of the Marconi Fashion Group (Corso Marconi at Morse corner Marconi St. Makati City, Robinson's Galleria, SM North EDSA, SM Fairview, Fetival Mall Alabang and Cebu). In addition to the 30 percent discount, some collections at Corso Marconi shops are available from P50 to P995 (except shoes and December arrivals).

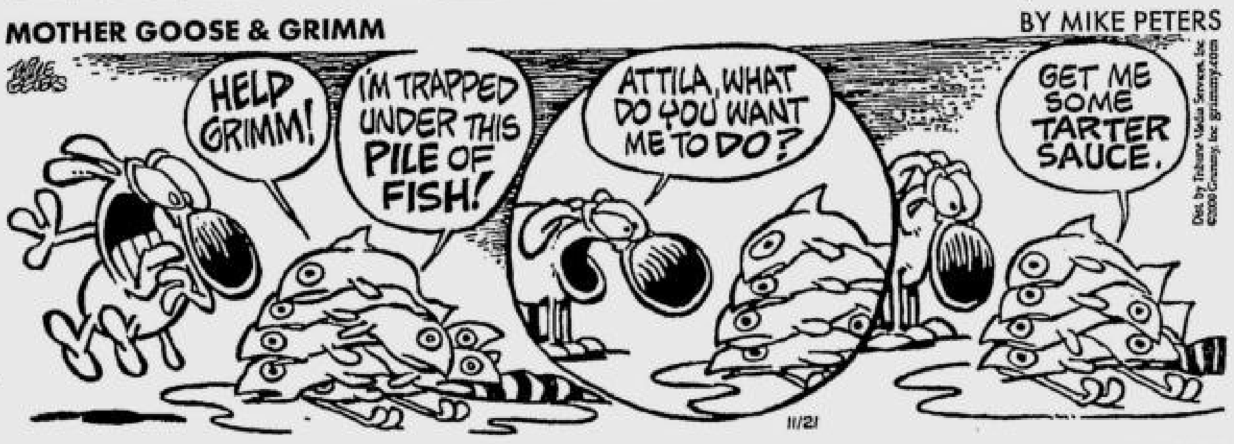
FURNITURE EXHIBIT

Rustan's Superstore Cubao is having a furniture exhibit titled "Export Quality Home Furnishing at Factory Prices" at the RCC Area, Gen. Romulo St. entrance. The exhibit will run until Jan. 31, 2001. Signing the agreement are (from left) Elsa Moreno, Rustan's marketing officer; Raph Reyes, Rustan's general manager; Juliet Yu, Trade Show Specialist Inc. operations manager; and Nicasio Pinto, Rustan's marketing director.

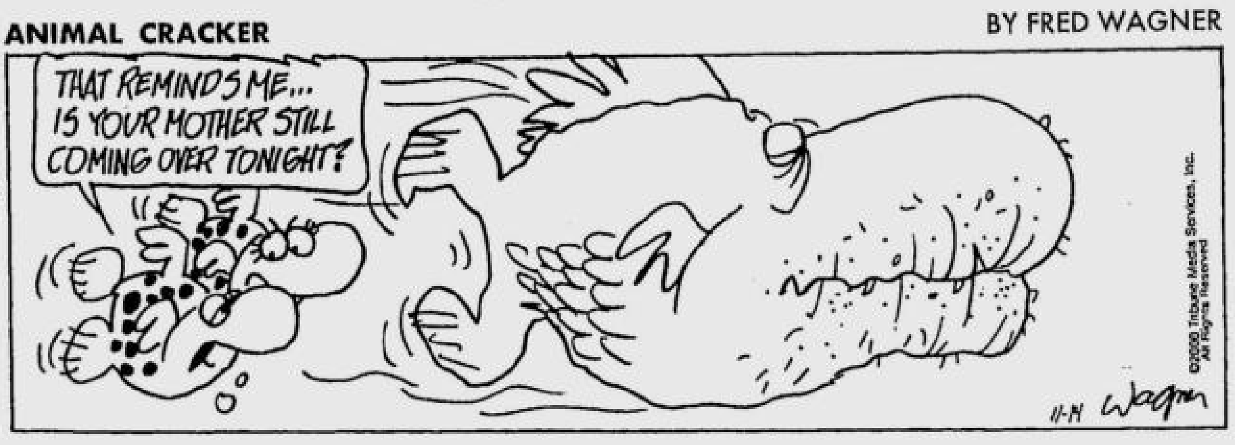
NATASHA OPENS DAVAO BRANCH

Natasha, the direct selling company marketing shoes, bags and apparel recently opened its Davao branch at Door 3 and 4 Grand Men Seng Hotel, Magallanes – Anda St., Davao City. Natasha's first branch in Mindanao brings its merchandise distribution, networking and customer services to Davao and the surrounding provinces. Cutting the ribbon are consistent national top dealers Ma. Nelia Estayani and Edwin Tan. Officiating priest is Fr. Julius J. Tonel.

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM BY MIKE PETERS


HELP GRIMM!
I'M TRAPPED UNDER THIS PILE OF FISH!
ATTILA, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?
GET ME SOME TARTER SAUCE.
Dist. by Tribune Media Services, Inc. ©2000 Grimmy, Inc. grimmy.com
11/21

ANIMAL CRACKER BY FRED WAGNER


THAT REMINDS ME... IS YOUR MOTHER STILL COMING OVER TONIGHT?
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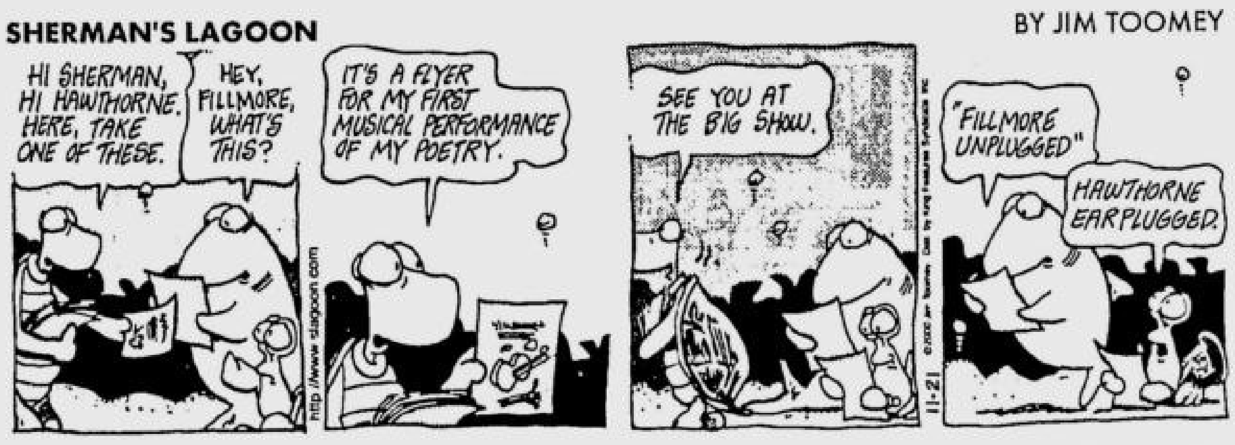
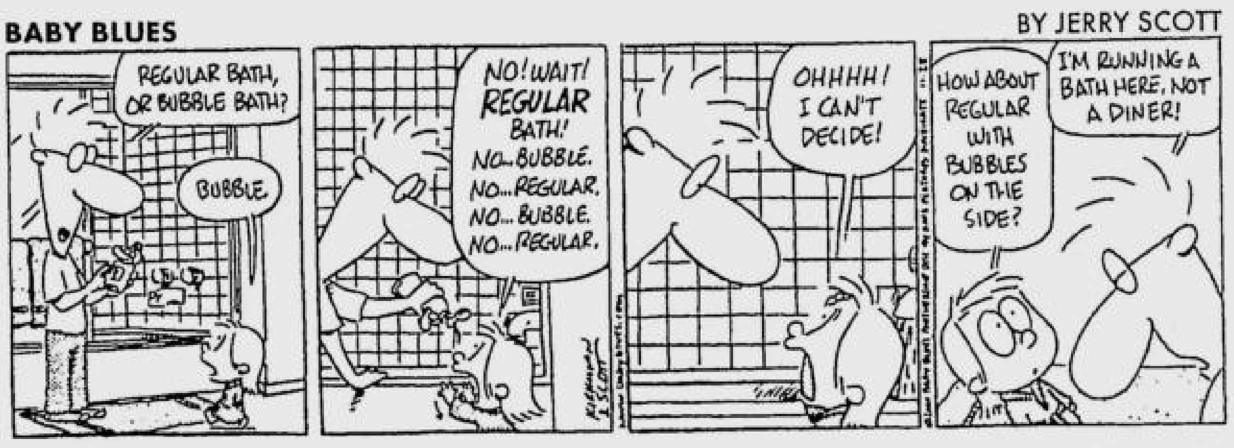
11-14 Wagner

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY


HI SHERMAN, HI HAWTHORNE. HERE, TAKE ONE OF THESE.
HEY, FILLMORE, WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S A FLYER FOR MY FIRST MUSICAL PERFORMANCE OF MY POETRY.
SEE YOU AT THE BIG SHOW.
"FILLMORE UNPLUGGED"
HAWTHORNE EARPLUGGED.
http://www.slagoon.com
11-21

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


REGULAR BATH, OR BUBBLE BATH?
BUBBLE.
NO! WAIT! REGULAR BATH! NO...BUBBLE. NO...REGULAR. NO... BUBBLE. NO...REGULAR.
OHHHH! I CAN'T DECIDE!
HOW ABOUT REGULAR WITH BUBBLES ON THE SIDE?
I'M RUNNING A BATH HERE, NOT A DINER!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Susannah York, Richard Nixon, Crystal Gayle, Joan Baez, Bart Starr, A.J. McLean, Dave Matthews, Jimmy Page, Bob Denver

Happy Birthday: Become involved in exciting projects that will boost your morale and your self-esteem. If you set your own rules, the people you approach will be glad to participate. You will discover how unique and innovative you truly are just by the response that you get from others. This is a great year for you to do your own thing and implement all the ideas you have. Your numbers: 19, 24, 28, 33, 36, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You may be in the mood for a good fight today. Try hard to channel your energy into more progressive areas such as making positive changes to yourself or your surroundings.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Use your energy wisely. Take a trip that will bring you knowledge or get busy on some of those ideas you've had for small-business ventures. Don't let others hold you back.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You must concentrate on your goals and not on other people's problems. Take care of any health problem that arises, no matter how small. Look into travel opportunities.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let your mood swings get out of hand, or you may find yourself isolated. Offer to help someone who is not self-sufficient. Don't eat foods that don't agree with your stomach.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may find yourself upset with colleagues or your boss early in the day. Keep your cool and let it pass. You should be more intent on making yourself look good, not on making others looking bad.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will have to work hard to accomplish anything today. Rewards will be yours if you put your heart and soul into the project you are involved in. Opportunities will surface.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You may be a bit tired of the nagging and criticisms you have been putting up with. Take a look at yourself. If the complaints are justified, get busy making personal changes.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You shouldn't try to deal with officials or superiors early in the day. You may want to make residential changes or look into property investments as the day progresses.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will have to be careful that someone doesn't interfere with your career goals. Keep your thoughts to yourself and concentrate on obtaining your objectives.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Get to work early, and you will find that praise will follow. You can make professional moves that will lead to higher wages and more responsibility.

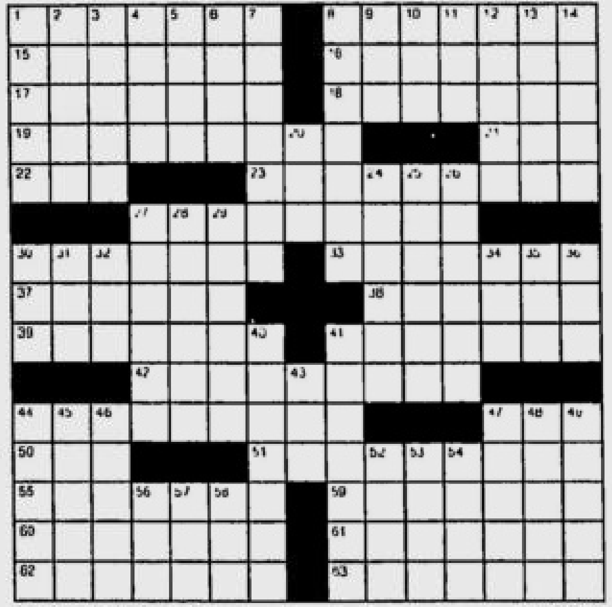
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You may be eager to disagree with your boss. Hold your tongue and think twice before you say something that may cost you your job. Patience will be the key.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Don't take on unreasonable financial obligations. It is best to work on yourself and your own surroundings. You must make yourself happy before you can make others content.

Birthday Baby: You are always gauging what you should and shouldn't do, trying to do what's right. You stand on solid ground, feeling the need to stick to your beliefs and high standards.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Annabel Michaels
Williamsburg, VA
11/25/00

ACROSS
1 Vain
8 Scorched
15 Voraciously carnivorous caribe
16 Leading lady
17 Eliminate
18 Informal alliance
19 Exaggerate
21 Highly valued person
22 Make one
23 Current controllers
27 Shine
30 Gangster Al and others
33 Acupressure massage
37 Get
38 British Conservatives
39 Feathers of the Chicago Bears
41 Cure-all
42 Like a dive
44 George Plimpton book
47 Neighbor of Wash.
50 "__ in the Family"
51 Marvelettes hit, "__ 4-5789"
55 Uncomplaining
59 Make a connection
60 Tugboat attachment
61 Artist's loft
62 Agrees
63 Study anew

DOWN
1 Violinist's stroke
2 Wire mesh utensil
3 Dropped the ball
4 Hideaway
5 Tips
6 Worn out
7 African adventures
8 Gorgonzola and gouda
9 Coop layer
10 Simon's Garfunkel
11 Caviar
12 Starr of "The Magic Christian"
13 1967 Carl Reiner comedy, "__ Laughing"
14 Considers
20 Bo Derek movie
24 Beatty/Hoffman movie of 1987
25 Heirs
26 Rip into
27 Abhor
28 Go-between
29 Servile
30 Male swan
31 Lincoln's nickname
32 School grp.
34 Muscle spasm
35 Get the point
36 John Dos Passos work
40 Foodstuffs
41 Bat stickum
43 Adversary
44 Neapolitan noodles
45 Countertenors
46 Farm implements
47 Asia Minor region
48 One who mollycoddles
49 Beautify
52 Quote an example
53 Command to Fido
54 __ E. Coyote
56 Choler
57 Swindle
58 Fitting

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

E	R	G	■	S	L	E	P	T	■	O	B	E	S	E
N	O	R	■	H	A	D	E	S	■	G	R	A	I	L
E	T	O	■	A	R	I	S	E	■	D	O	S	E	D
■	A	W	O	R	D	T	O	T	H	E	W	I	S	E
S	T	I	L	E	■	■	■	S	O	N	N	E	T	S
P	I	N	E	■	C	A	N	E	S	■	B	R	A	T
C	O	T	■	O	H	I	O	■	A	A	A	■	■	■
A	N	O	T	H	E	R	M	A	N	S	G	A	I	N
■	■	■	H	O	D	■	A	I	N	U	■	L	S	U
R	A	N	I	■	D	E	R	M	A	■	R	I	O	T
O	V	E	R	T	A	X	■	■	■	A	H	E	M	S
B	E	T	T	E	R	T	H	A	N	N	O	N	E	■
E	N	T	E	R	■	R	O	W	A	N	■	A	T	M
R	U	L	E	R	■	A	B	O	V	E	■	T	R	A
T	E	E	N	Y	■	S	O	L	E	S	■	E	Y	E

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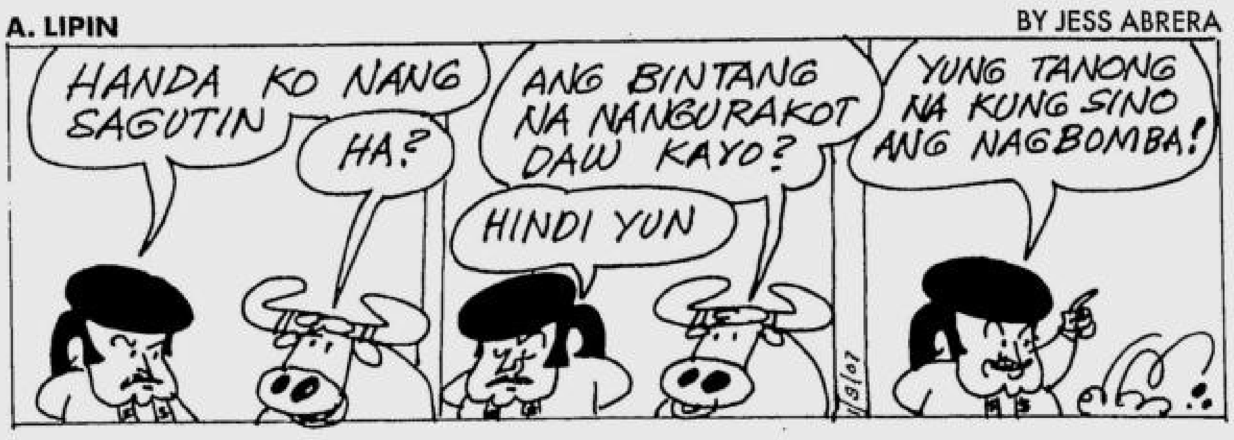
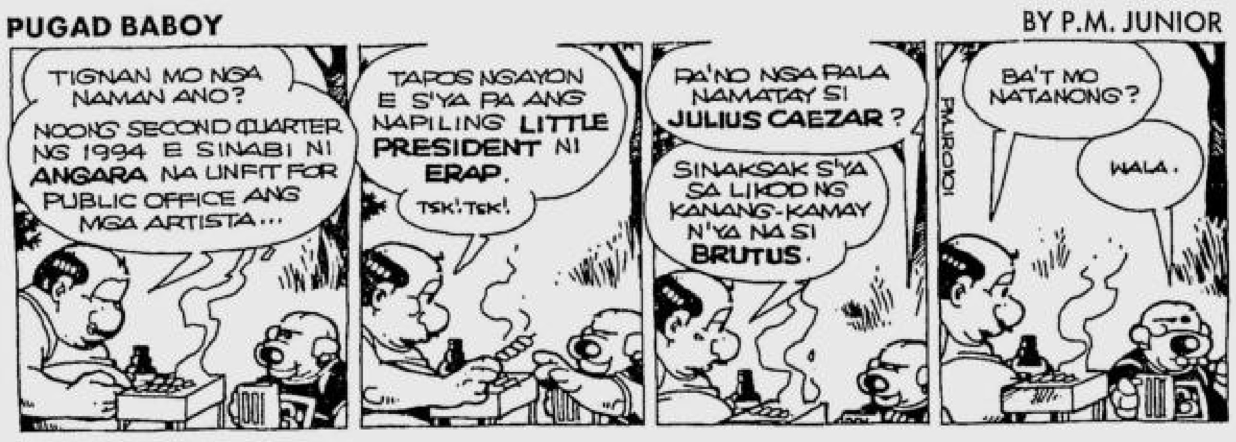
11/25/00

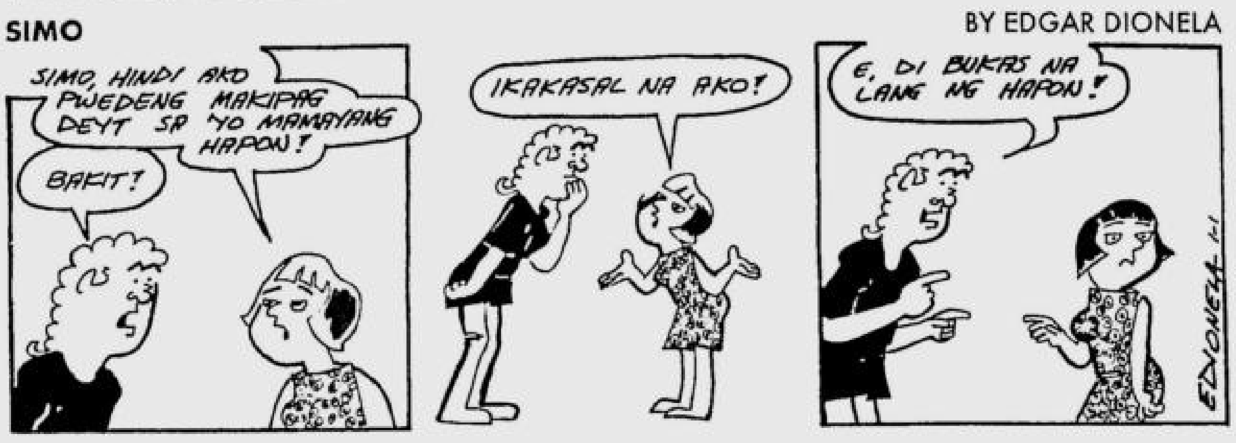
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


HANDA KO NANG SAGUTIN
HA?
ANG BINTANG NA NANGURAKOT DAW KAYO?
HINDI YUN
YUNG TANONG NA KUNG SINO ANG NAGBOMBA!
1/9/01

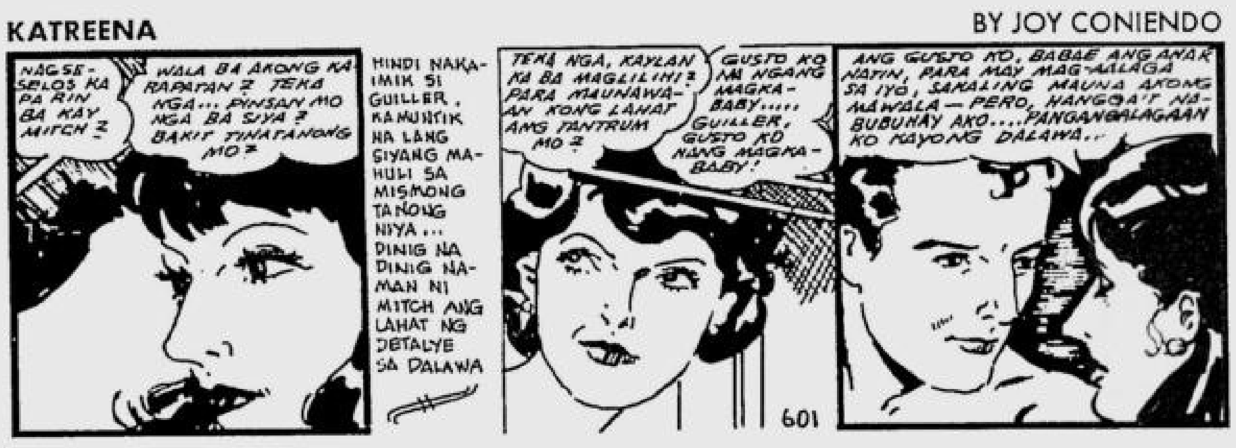
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


TIGNAN MO NGA NAMAN ANO?
NOONG SECOND QUARTER NG 1994 E SINABI NI ANGARA NA UNFIT FOR PUBLIC OFFICE ANG MGA ARTISTA...
TAPOS NGAYON E S'YA PA ANG NAPILING LITTLE PRESIDENT NI ERAP.
TSK! TSK!
PA'NO NGA PALA NAMATAY SI JULIUS CAEZAR?
SINAKSAK S'YA SA LIKOD NG KANANG-KAMAY N'YA NA SI BRUTUS.
PMJR0101
BA'T MO NATANONG?
WALA.

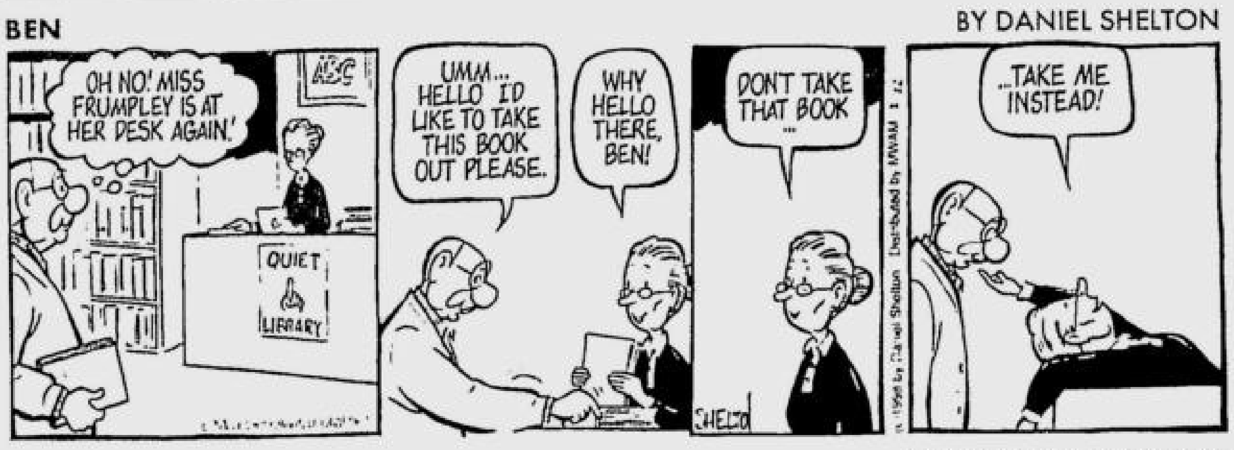
SIMO BY EDGAR DIONELA


SIMO, HINDI AKO PWEDENG MAKIPAG DEYT SA 'YO MAMAYANG HAPON!
BAKIT?
IKAKASAL NA AKO!
E, DI BUKAS NA LANG NG HAPON!
EDIONELA 1-1

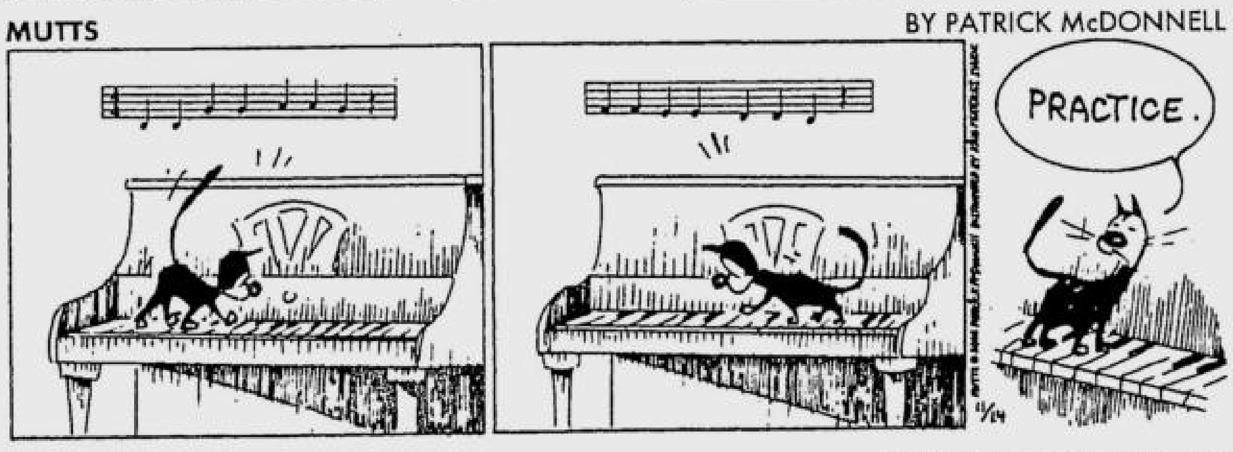
KATREENA BY JOY CONIENDO


NAGSESELOS KA PA RIN BA KAY MITCH?
WALA BA AKONG KARAPATAN? TEKA NGA... PINSAN MO NGA BA SIYA? BAKIT TINATANONG MO?
HINDI NAKAIMIK SI GUILLER, KAMUNTIK NA LANG SIYANG MAHULI SA MISMONG TANONG NIYA... DINIG NA DINIG NAMAN NI MITCH ANG LAHAT NG DETALYE SA DALAWA
TEKA NGA, KAYLAN KA BA MAGLILIHI? PARA MAUNAWAAN KONG LAHAT ANG TANTRUM MO?
GUSTO KO NA NGANG MAGKA-BABY..... GUILLER, GUSTO KO NANG MAGKA-BABY!
ANG GUSTO KO, BABAE ANG ANAK NATIN, PARA MAY MAG-AALAGA SA IYO, SAKALING MAUNA AKONG MAWALA — PERO, HANGGA'T NABUBUHAY AKO.... PANGANGALAGAAN KO KAYONG DALAWA...
601

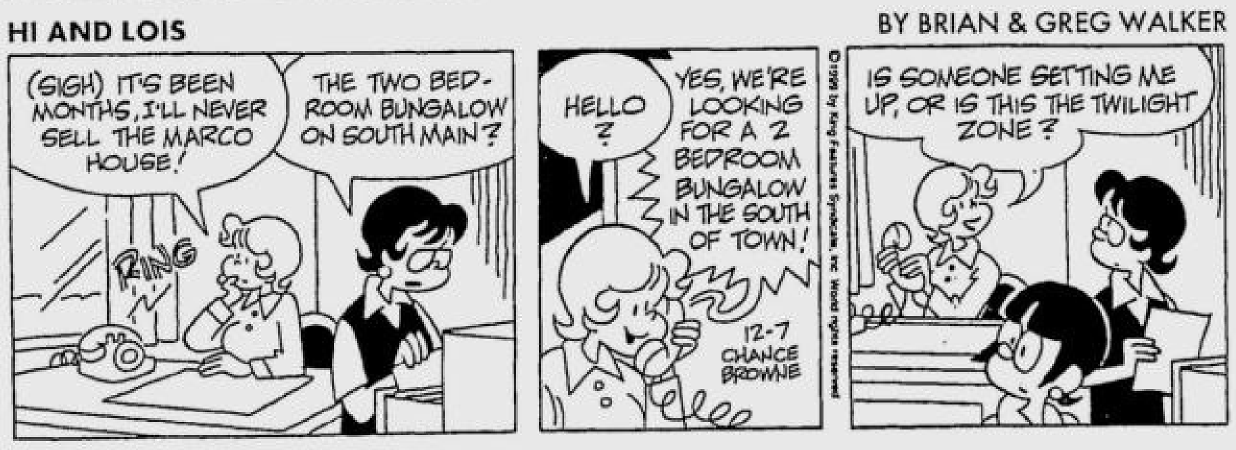
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH NO! MISS FRUMPLEY IS AT HER DESK AGAIN!
ABC
QUIET LIBRARY
UMM... HELLO I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS BOOK OUT PLEASE.
WHY HELLO THERE, BEN!
DON'T TAKE THAT BOOK ...
...TAKE ME INSTEAD!
SHELTON

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PRACTICE.
11/24

HI AND LOIS BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


(SIGH) IT'S BEEN MONTHS, I'LL NEVER SELL THE MARCO HOUSE!
RING
THE TWO BEDROOM BUNGALOW ON SOUTH MAIN?
HELLO?
YES, WE'RE LOOKING FOR A 2 BEDROOM BUNGALOW IN THE SOUTH OF TOWN!
12-7 CHANCE BROWNE
IS SOMEONE SETTING ME UP, OR IS THIS THE TWILIGHT ZONE?
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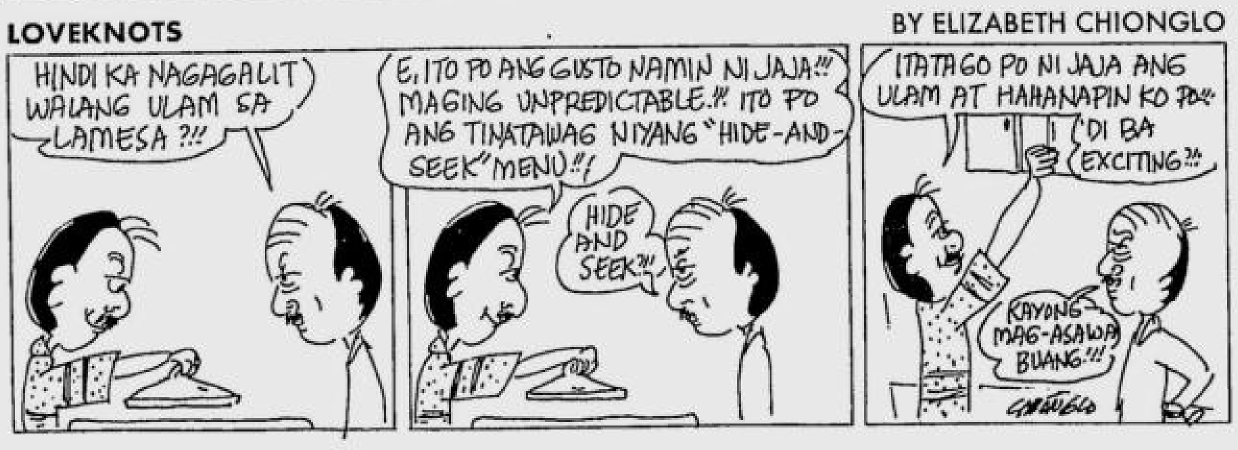
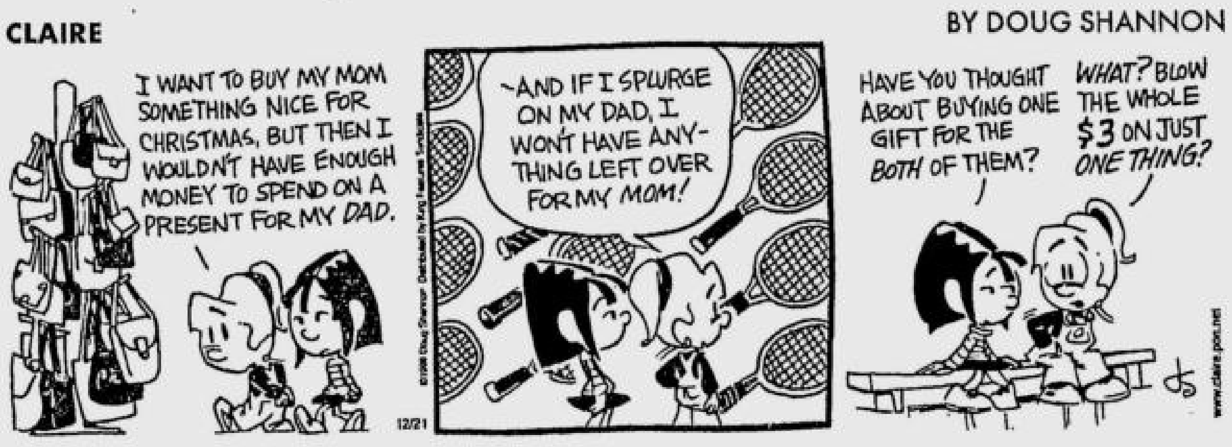
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI KA NAGAGALIT WALANG ULAM SA LAMESA ?!!
E, ITO PO ANG GUSTO NAMIN NI JAJA!!! MAGING UNPREDICTABLE!!! ITO PO ANG TINATAWAG NIYANG "HIDE-AND-SEEK" MENU!!!
HIDE AND SEEK?!!
ITATAGO PO NI JAJA ANG ULAM AT HAHANAPIN KO PO!! 'DI BA EXCITING?!!
KAYONG MAG-ASAWA BUANG!!!
CHIONGLO

CLAIRE BY DOUG SHANNON


I WANT TO BUY MY MOM SOMETHING NICE FOR CHRISTMAS, BUT THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO SPEND ON A PRESENT FOR MY DAD.
~AND IF I SPLURGE ON MY DAD, I WON'T HAVE ANYTHING LEFT OVER FOR MY MOM!
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT BUYING ONE GIFT FOR THE BOTH OF THEM?
WHAT? BLOW THE WHOLE $3 ON JUST ONE THING?
12/21
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Lose weight by making realistic lifestyle changes

Part II

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

ALMA said it took a year of seeing her old friends on a regular basis to inspire her to lose weight. This was because the more she saw her friends, the more she realized that most of us were relatively slim while she had ballooned to 175 pounds. She felt that if we could do it, so could she.

At our March 2000 meeting, she started asking questions about how to lose weight. She had a few misconceptions that she had to shed fats because these beliefs were obstacles to her weight loss. She thought she could only lose weight if she joined a gym, went on a diet, ate special "health" food and did a whole range of exercises that would tire her out.

She said she couldn't go to a gym because there was no gym close to where she lived. I assured her that while going to a gym would be helpful, she didn't need one to lose weight or get fit. Since she had recently lost her household help, she asked if doing housework could help her lose weight. I told her yes and to also go up and down her stairs as often as she could in the course of her day, and start walking at a pace and duration that she could handle, even if that only meant walking very slowly for only 10 minutes. I also made some suggestions on how she could trim away the excess calories from her food without "dieting."

In June when we met again, she reported she had been doing vigorous housework (sweeping, scrubbing, polishing, washing clothes, etc.) and said she felt energized with more strength and stamina. However, she had not changed her eating habits because she still clung to the belief that the extra activity was all she needed to lose weight. Since she wasn't seeing any weight-loss results, she finally realized she had no choice but to make the necessary dietary changes. I reiterated to her that she didn't need to give up her Coke altogether, but it would definitely help if she reduced the amount she was taking.

She was also concerned about her smoking because she felt she couldn't give up her nicotine habit at the same time she tried to lose weight. I told her that if that's the way she felt, then she just had to fight her battles one at a time. If she had the motivation to work on her weight problem but not her cigarette smoking, then that's what she should concentrate on first. Later on down the road, she could tackle her smoking habit. I told her many people discovered they wanted to cut down or even quit smoking upop developing good eating and exercise habits.

She made the decision to consciously reduce the amounts of food she was eating. She did this by eating breakfast, lunch and dinner—one cup of rice with whatever was her choice of meat, chicken or fish, vegetables and fruits—and two small snacks a day. She had dinner at 6 p.m. and slept by 8:30 p.m. so she wouldn't be tempted to have midnight snacks.

Her three-liter-a-day consumption of Coke was cut down to two liters a week (a "savings" of 19 liters a week).

At our Christmas get-together, she told me that before, she needed three to four servings to be satisfied, but now she would be full with just one serving. Once in a while she has two servings. She eats chocolates or cake once a month only. She does not go to eat-all-you-can buffet restaurants anymore. She drinks a lot of water and while she doesn't really like vegetables, she does eat squash, cabbage, eggplant and a few other veggies. She does not sleep siesta anymore nor does she just lie down watching TV in the mornings. To fight her boredom, she now sings with her karaoke VCD. She also invites her friends to sing with her, but they make sure not to have any *merienda* together.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Her one-pack-a-day smoking habit has been cut down to two packs a week. My prayer is that she will have the desire, motivation and courage to eventually quit altogether, but like I told her before, one step at a time.

Alma didn't weigh herself because she knew from past experience that seeing her weight fluctuate or hardly change would just disappoint her. She chose to use her waist measurement as a way of assessing her progress. She started with a 38-inch waist, which steadily got smaller so that by the time I saw her at our Christmas lunch, she had a 34-inch waistline.

It's interesting to note, though, that she experienced a plateau between July and November, where she only lost one inch. This is very normal and should not be taken as a sign of failure. In seven months, she went from an XXXL to an L in dress size.

Her goals for 2001

Her goal is to be a medium size in clothes, have a 30-inch waist by June and a 29-inch waist by Christmas 2001. She still does not want to hire any household helpers so she can continue her "exercise program" of vigorous housework. However, she says she is now ready for a simple time-efficient program of specific muscle-toning exercises which she intends to do together with her neighbor. Of course, I am sending her a gift of exercise rubber bands and a program she can do at home.

She no longer wears her husband's clothes and she can now wear many of her old clothes, but her husband has promised her he will buy her a whole new wardrobe when she reaches her goals. That's what I call a supportive husband and a great reward to look forward to!

Lessons from Alma's story

- Get active any way that you can (she chose housework).
- Find a hobby so you don't make eating your therapy to cope with negative situations in life.
- Don't bother taking diet pills (she had tried to lose weight by taking Ionamin, which gave her palpitations and by taking one cup of Kankunis tea every night for one year, which had no effect on her at all except to make her go to the bathroom more often).
- Enjoy fattening foods in moderation.
- Use other ways of measuring your progress aside from the weighing scale (tape measure, clothes and body fat analysis).
- Surround yourself with supportive friends and loved ones.
- It's never too late to lose weight and get fit.
- Believe that you can do it.

Visit my website (www.tinajuanfitness.com) for past articles or exercises

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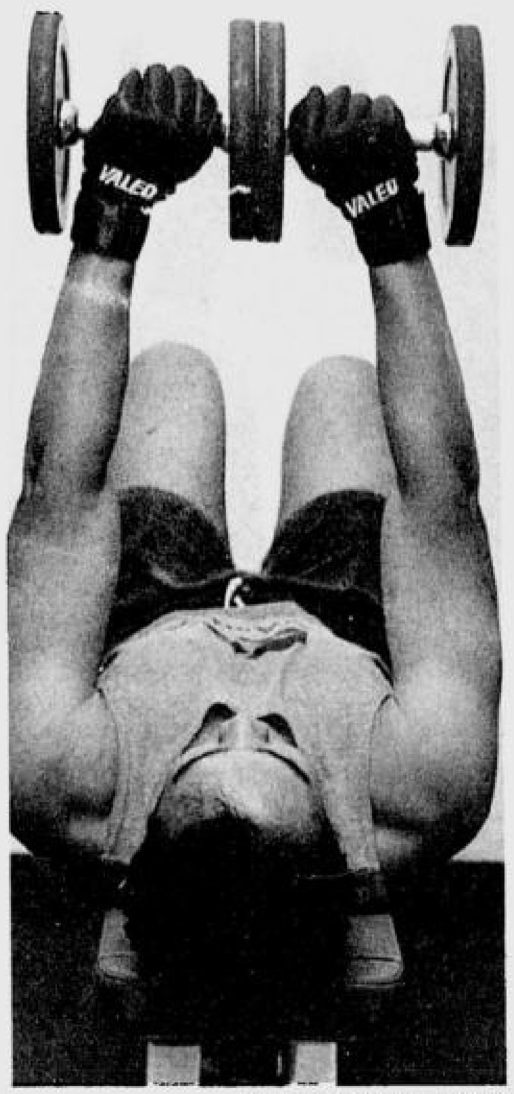
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Dumbbell flyes



PHOTOS BY ROGER MARGALLO

This "modern" version strengthens the muscles of the chest with less risk of shoulder joint injury. The difference is in the position of the palms. The traditional way is to have the palms facing each other. The modern way is to have the palms facing the knees.

Equipment:
Exercise mat or gym bench
Pair of dumbbells

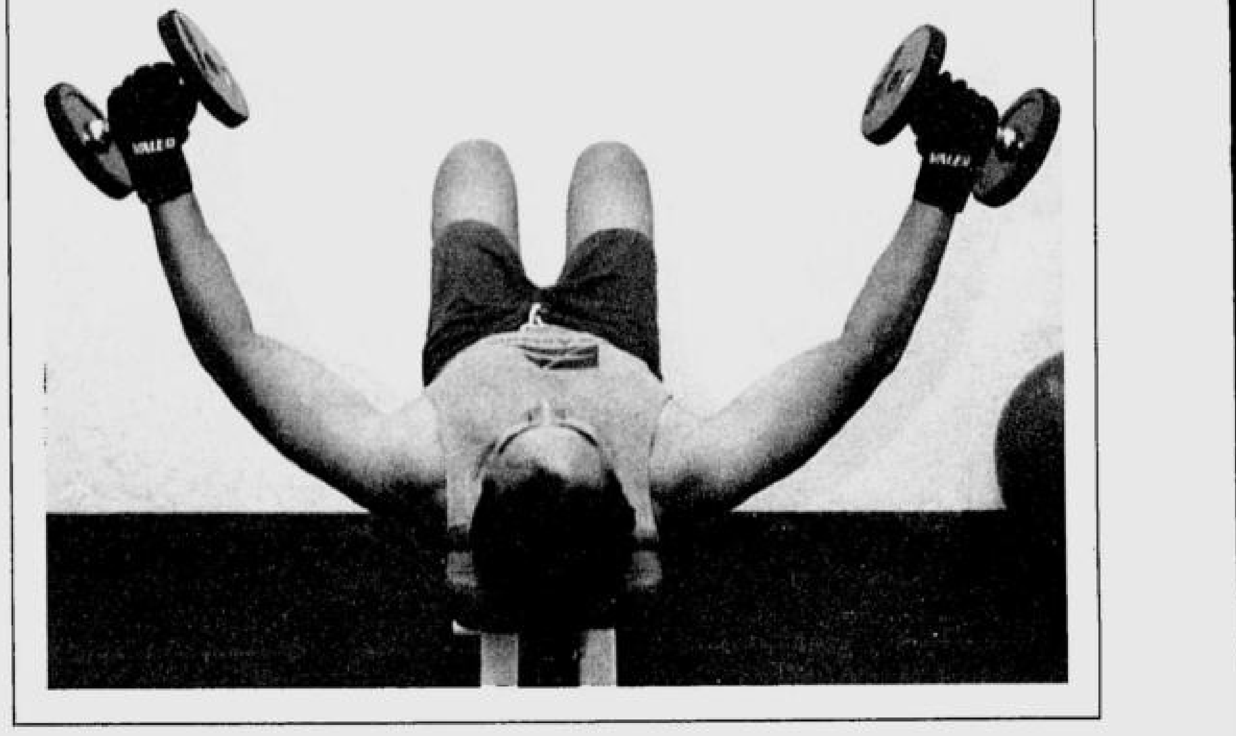
Exercise technique:

1. Lie on your back on a gym bench or on the floor on an exercise mat. Your knees should be bent with feet flat on the floor or on bench.
2. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, directly above your shoulder joint with the palms facing the knees. Keep your elbows slightly bent.
3. Slowly lower your arms outward to about halfway between starting position and shoulder level. Make sure to keep arms in line with shoulder joints.
4. Slowly bring your arms back to the starting position.

Performance tips:

1. Maintain control of your muscles throughout the exercise. Avoid jerking or using momentum to raise or lower the weight.
2. Avoid straightening your elbows. Keep them slightly bent all throughout the exercise.
3. As you lower your arms, maintain a slight tightness in the abdominal area to prevent your lower back from overarching.
4. Do not lower your elbows beyond shoulder level as this places great stress on the shoulder joints. You really only need to go halfway between starting position and shoulder level.

Repetitions:
Do one set of eight to 12 repetitions. Do one to three sets.



Dealing with secret power words and strong psychic perception

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

A 32-YEAR-OLD professional manager and frequent reader of this column asked two interesting questions. The first is about the power of "oracion" and the other is about ESP. Here is a condensed version of his letter.

"Are you aware of Latin chants? Somebody gave me Latin chants to recite against enemies to protect me and my family. I don't know what they mean although I've used an old Latin-English dictionary. Are these really Latin words or some other language like Enochian?

"The words are Verdictum, Erum, Etom, Utom. Do these chants really have the effect of calming down enemies? Would you have related literature on this topic? I have other chants which I would like to discuss with you when we meet personally."

What you refer to as "Latin chants" are more popularly known as "oraciones" which literally means "prayers." Actually, they are secret power words with specific effects or uses. For example, there is an "oracion" against bullets, another against snakebites, another against knives, another against dogs, etc. There is also an oracion to make any woman like you, what is known as *pang-gayuma*. In healing, there is an oracion to enable one to open up the human body without a knife through psychic surgery, to pull teeth without pain, and to remove all kinds of pains from the body. There is an oracion to make one's self invisible to others or to enable one to walk on fire or hold boiling oil without being hurt.

In other words, there seems to be an oracion for practically any human need or desire.

Where do these "oraciones" come from? Nobody really knows. I've asked a lot of people about this and I've been given different answers. According to one source, the words used in oracion are not really Latin but a strange language they call "Burnay." I was told that the word comes from "Borneo" that's why it's called "Burnay." Another told me it's a mixture of Latin and Tagalog, and not really pure Latin, no wonder your Latin-English dictionary does not have entries for these words.

How effective are they? My research on this matter is not conclusive. I've heard testimonies from highly credible people that oraciones really work, especially against poisonous snakes, dog bites, etc. Some say they are even effective against bullet or knife wounds. But I really can't tell, because I have no firsthand experience in using them.

Many years back, I used a "prayer" together with some natural stones given to me by a lady faith healer to be used on a woman who was angry with me at that time and did not even want to talk to me. After saying the prayer for three straight nights and invoking her name, I called her up and asked her if she would accompany me to a beautiful resort outside of Manila. To my surprise, she agreed. I never used that prayer and those stones anymore. I only wanted to test the efficacy of those so-called power words.

The prayer I used was not in Latin but in English. And it was a Christian prayer, not some pagan or strange prayer. It is even familiar to any Christian Filipino. I also don't know the effects of the three stones I was supposed to use in connection with the prayer. Could be coincidence, if there's such a thing.

The other question this reader asked concerns ESP. According to him, "One time, when I was expecting a promotion, another friend advised me to ask for a sign, so that when I see that sign, my wish will come true.

"I asked to see a yellow butterfly in our garden, where one will not usually see such butterflies anymore. Two weeks after, I actually saw a yellow butterfly in our garden, and it even flew close to me.

"There are many other instances when what I had actually thought of or had premonitions about came true. Does it mean I have a third eye or ESP? I will appreciate your response."

Seeing an event before it happens is a good sign that one has strong ESP or precognitive powers. But please bear in mind that ESP is manifested in so many ways, not only in seeing the future. Healing, seeing auras, reading thoughts, finding lost objects or missing persons, seeing or becoming aware of spirits, etc. are also signs of ESP ability. Unfortunately, in this country, we usually equate the word ESP with only seeing the future, which is not correct. Some good psychics make bad prophets or fortune-tellers, but they may have other psychic talents. All of us have ESP or psychic powers. Even mentally handicapped or autistic children have very strong psychic perceptions or abilities. Much more so with normal people. You can develop these powers through mental exercises, meditation and reading books on the subject. You may also attend seminars on ESP or mind development provided the instructor is reliable or well-trained.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit my Website at www.geocities.com/eureka/concourse/5069 for more details

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Crusaders for the needy play Santa to 60 sick kids

MARVIN S. Figuracion is an 8-year-old patient at the East Avenue Medical Center. An emaciated boy due to brain tumor and too small for his age, he looked shy and sad as he clung to his grandma's shoulder when people talk to him.

But, when he saw Santa Claus and the Jollibee mascot coming by, his eyes brightened up and he giggled. He smiled and even shook hands with them.

This was the scene at the children's charity ward of the hospital in the afternoon of Dec. 29. The 60 children, each with different affliction, were instantly aroused with enthusiasm to play and dance at the sight of Jollibee and Santa Claus prancing to the tune of happy Christmas carols sung by members of the Crusaders for the Needy.

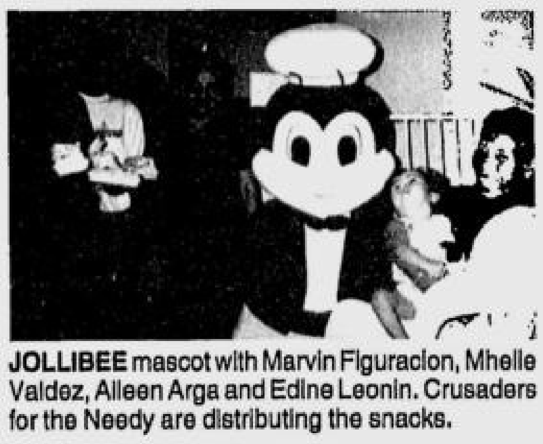
The Crusaders for the Needy is a group of civic-oriented individuals with genuine care and love for the children, and who took time out from their busy schedule and focus their energies and fund-raising skills to bring cheers, snacks and gifts to the kids at the hospital and to the Molave Youth Jail, QC, a home for troubled and delinquent boys and girls ages 14-18.

A healing Mass officiated by Fr. Alfonso Shibatu started the affair, followed by the laying of hands with the priest and the healing ministry on patients who requested for it.

Active members are Baby Cinco, Chito Hinanay, Ric Guevarra, Virgilio dela Cruz, Maria Fe Espartero, Gizelle Leonin, Agnes Cinco, Erwin, Naomi Fe Reyes, Elna Love Miranda, Fedan Boco, Haydee Trance, Rocel Rios.

Project coordinator was Noemi B. Reyes. Ric Zamora played the role of Santa Claus.

GIFT distribution with Baby Cinco carrying the sack of gifts to Santa Claus with Edine Leonin and Des Zamora



JOLLIBEE mascot with Marvin Figuracion, Mhelle Valdez, Aileen Arga and Edine Leonin. Crusaders for the Needy are distributing the snacks.

FR. Alfonso Shibatu of Nativity parish officiated the Mass before the gift-giving event.

LIFESTYLE Fitness
CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

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PYT wraps up fitness scene of 2000

By Alex Y. Vergara

The past year saw many fitness buffs turn into pretty young things with Pilates, yoga and taebo

FORGET about body wraps, Xenical, ephedra and various forms of "passive" exercises. Last year's fitness scene can be wrapped up in three letters—PYT.

And we're not referring to Michael Jackson's "Pretty Young Thing" (although every female fitness buff—and male, too—has been hoping to look like one some day), but to three leading forms of exercises that have swept the country's gyms and fitness clubs last year: Pilates, yoga and taebo.

Fitness guru and INQUIRER Lifestyle columnist Tina Aboitiz-Juan attests to this as she and her team saw a dramatic increase in the number of participants in Pilates, yoga and taebo classes they conducted at Fitness Advantage.

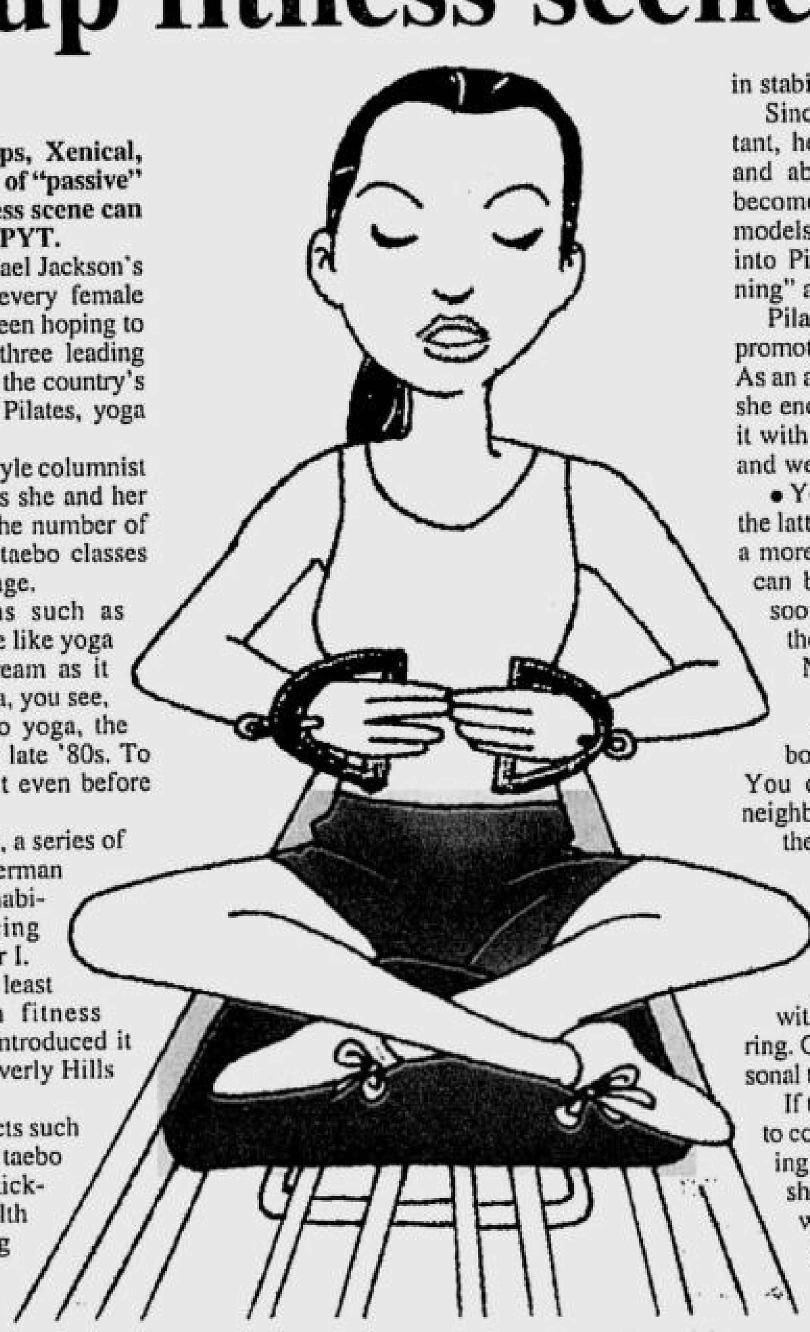
Thanks, too, to global icons such as Madonna. A once-esoteric practice like yoga was soon thrust into the mainstream as it gained a hipper edge. The pop diva, you see, has lately been singing paeans to yoga, the way she pumped iron back in the late '80s. To think Easterners have been into it even before Christ was born!

The same holds true for Pilates, a series of physical routines introduced by German fitness expert Joseph Pilates to rehabilitate wounded and convalescing British soldiers during World War I.

It became a household word, at least among upper crust American fitness enthusiasts, when Don Fletcher introduced it primarily to show biz types in Beverly Hills several decades later.

Like other 20th-century products such as Colgate, Frigidaire and Cutex, taebo became the generic term for kickboxing. For all its perceived health benefits, taebo is really kickboxing set to music.

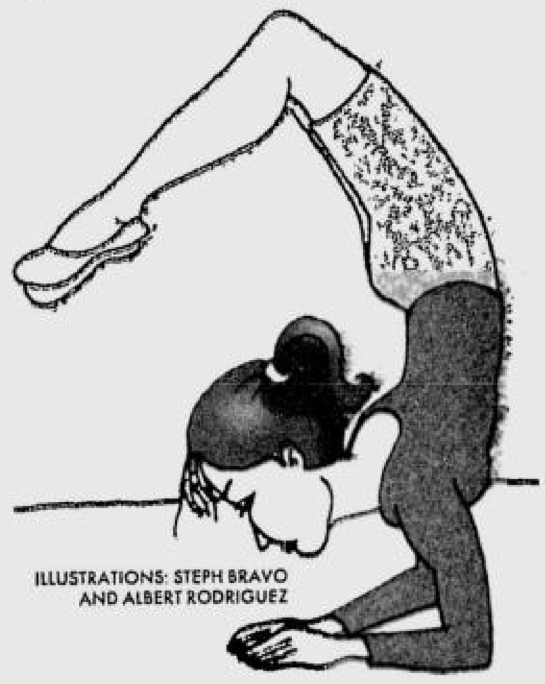
Juan credits martial arts expert Billy Blanks for popularizing taebo, first among fitness instructors, when he came out with an exercise video sometime in 1999.



But even Juan, with a fair amount of martial arts knowledge tucked under her tiny belt, found the video too fast and, thus, too difficult to follow, especially among beginners.

Before teaching taebo, er, kickboxing, Juan had to consult her taekwondo teacher to help her put together a routine. And just in time because every gym habitué has turned into a Michelle Yeoh or Jacky Chan wannabe, kicking and punching imaginary enemies (inspired, perhaps, by their favorite pet peeve—a toss up between their mothers-in-law or the beleaguered President).

If the current trend in the United States spills over locally, says Juan, expect more fitness buffs doing athletics-based workouts in 2001. Sessions based on basketball drills, for example, are set to music and done within the comforts of an air-conditioned gym.



ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO AND ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Still hot routines

Following are brief descriptions and supposed health benefits derived from three of last year's hottest action routines still showing at a gym near you:

- Pilates is a series of synchronized stretching exercises involving arms, legs and torso designed primarily to strengthen the trunk and lower back, areas, which Joseph Pilates believed was integral in stabilizing the entire body.

Since the mind shapes the body, it's important, he added, to first stabilize one's posture and abdominal area. No wonder Pilates has become the exercise of choice among dancers, models and performers. Some people who are into Pilates swear by its "stretching," "tightening" and "lengthening" effect.

Pilates, says Juan, teaches body awareness, promotes good posture and, yes, flatter stomachs. As an avowed believer in cross-training, though, she encourages those into Pilates to supplement it with other forms of exercise such as aerobics and weight training.

- Yoga is a similar discipline to pilates. While the latter is "flowing," Juan considers the former a more static form of exercise. But doing yoga can be quite difficult if done too much, too soon. She advises beginners to first stick to the basics before doing advanced yoga à la Madonna.
- Taebo, surprisingly, has been around since 1990 under such names as shadow boxing, boxerobics and, later, kickboxing. You don't have to be a black belter or the neighborhood toughie to fully internalize it. And the best part is it combines both the benefits of aerobic and anaerobic exercises.

As an offshoot to taebo, boxing has started to punch its way even to female corporate types. Red Corner and Fit for Life, both in Makati, offer boxing classes within the four corners of, well, a real boxing ring. Opponents, who can hire the services of personal trainers, are required to wear protective gear.

If this trend continues to pick up in the months to come, it won't be long before some enterprising soul out there offers punching bags in the shape, size and likeness of real people. Guess which dummy will be this year's runaway bestseller?

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

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RP gym franchise holder to oversee Asian markets

HELEN Castro-Limcaoco, the Philippine franchise owner of The Little Gym, a fitness-based total development center for children, has been named international owner-adviser for the Asian markets.

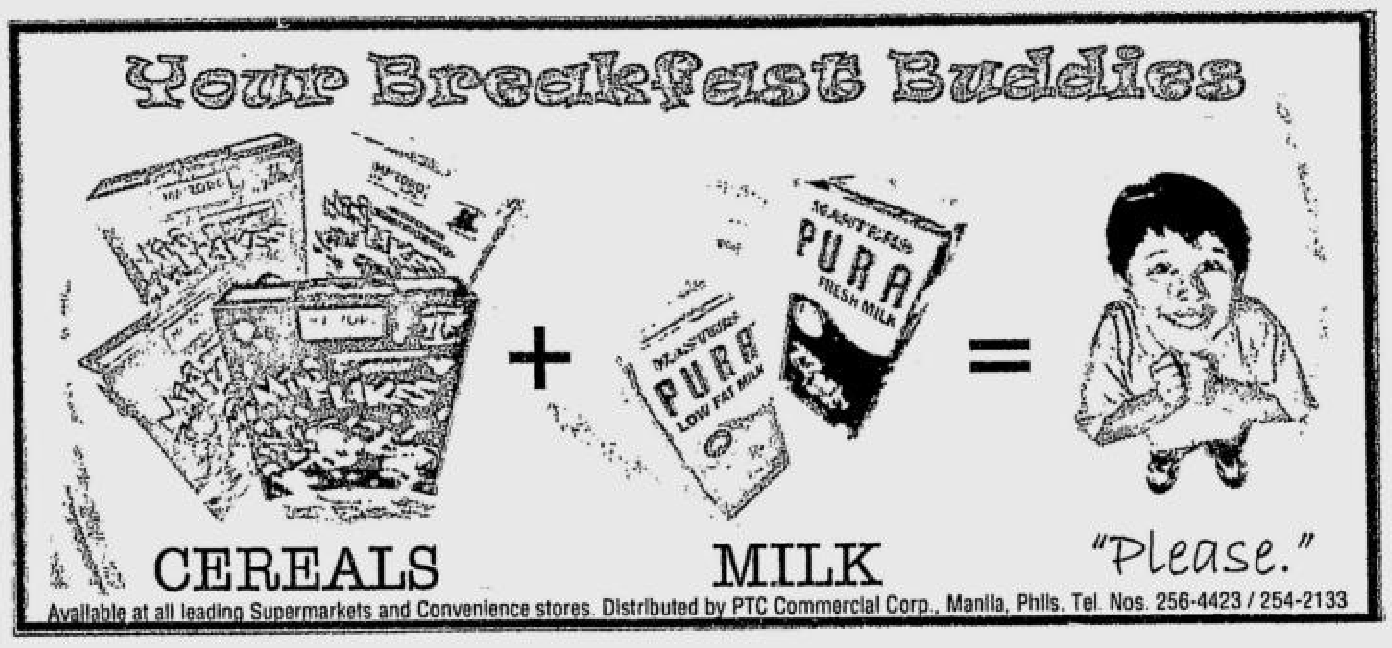
This was announced recently by Bob Bingham, CEO of The Little Gym Inc. based in Scottsdale, Arizona. The owner/advisor system was put in place for the franchisees in the United States in January 1999 to provide a system of support and guidance for new operators and new franchisees.

In the new system, Little Gym franchisees have business consultants who are not mere theoreticians, but are actual entrepreneurs who have risked their own capital, actually experienced running the business and made a success of their franchise. The objective of this "hand-holding" is that the newer franchisees should be able to gear up to profitability so much faster than before the system was in place and for the existing Gyms to finally reach profitability and stable enrolment.

HELEN Castro-Limcaoco

Bingham wanted to adopt the owner-advisor system internationally and chose Limcaoco, whose two Little Gyms here have been adjudged among the best in the world, each earning an "excellent" rating in the international Quality Measurement Survey (QMS). Limcaoco has managed to open the most number of facilities outside of the United States, and equal the enrolment numbers of franchisees in the United States for Gyms that are about the same age, despite the financial crisis in Southeast Asia.

Limcaoco got the Gym franchise in 1996 and opened the first branch at the 5/L of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall in Mandaluyong. A year later, she opened the second branch at Nicanor Garcia Street (formerly Reposo) in Makati, and last year, the third, at the Festival Mall in Alabang.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